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Shakspeare's
DRAMATIC WORKS:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND A SELECTION OF

NOTES, CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND EXPLANATORY,

BY THE

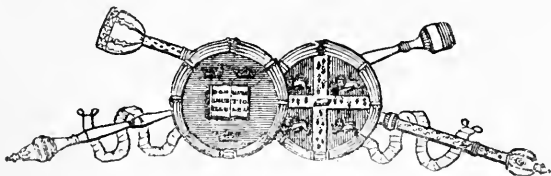
REV. W. HARNNESS, A.M.

OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

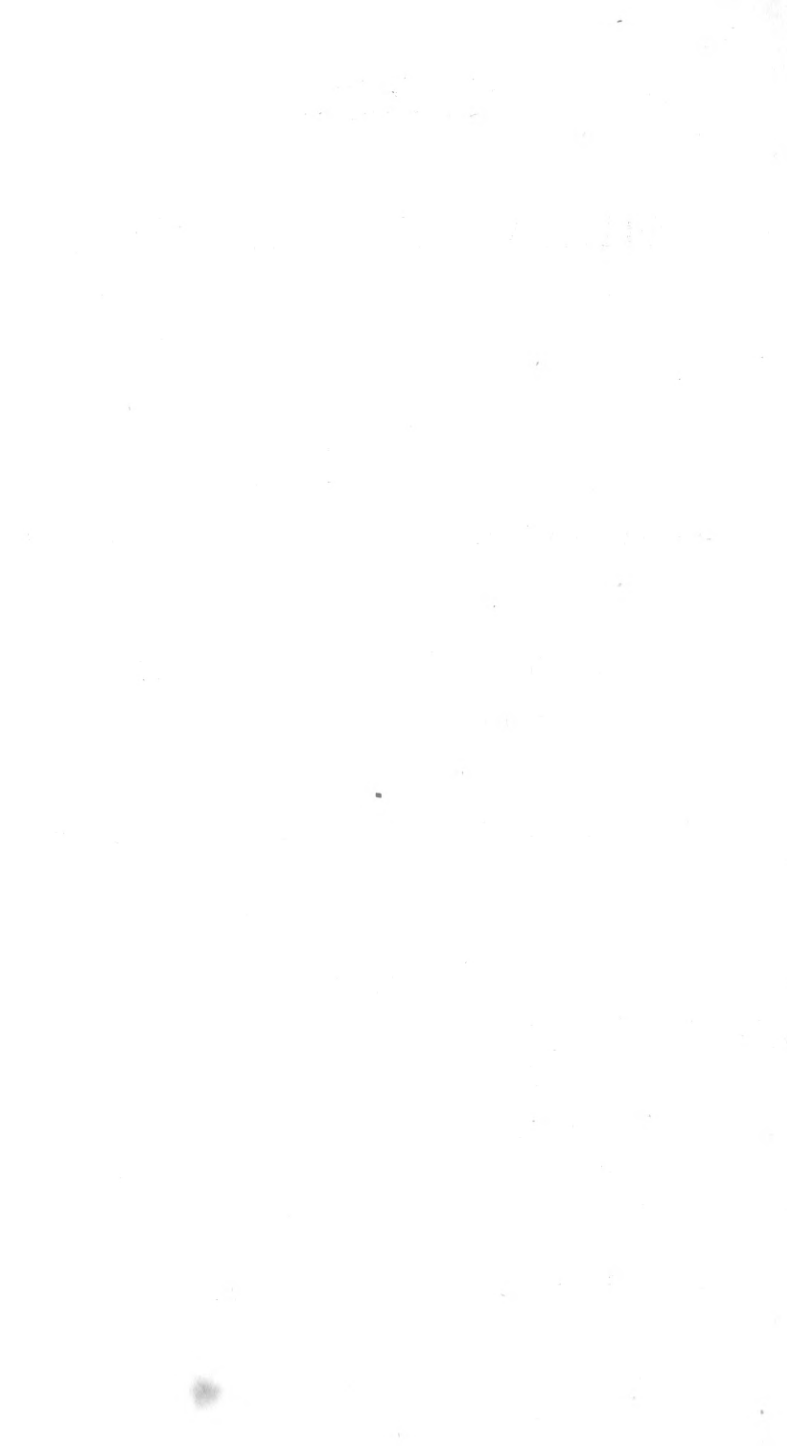
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SHAKSPEARE'S
DRAMATIC WORKS.

VOL. VIII.

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KING LEAR.

THIS tragedy was entered in the books of the Stationers' Company, Nov. 26, 1607, and is there mentioned as having been played the preceding Christmas before his majesty, at Whitehall. It must have been written after 1603, as Shakspeare has borrowed several fantastick names of spirits, mentioned in this play, from Harsnett's *Declaration of Popish Impostors*, which was published that year. King Lear was not printed till 1608.

There was an old play on the same subject, which had been in possession of the stage for many years before the production of Shakspeare's tragedy; but from which our author has copied one passage only. The story of King Lear and his three Daughters, is found in Holinshed's Chronicle; and was originally told by Geoffry of Monmouth, who says that Lear was the eldest son of Bladud, and "nobly governed his country for sixty years." According to that historian, he died about 800 years before Christ. Shakspeare has taken the hint for the behaviour of the steward, and the reply of Cordelia to her father concerning her future marriage, from *the Mirror of Magistrates*, 1587. According to Steevens, the episode of Gloster and his sons is borrowed from, Sidney's *Arcadia*.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LEAR, *king of Britain*

King of FRANCE.

Duke of BURGUNDY.

Duke of CORNWALL.

Duke of ALBANY.

Earl of KENT.

Earl of GLOSTER.

EDGAR, *son to Gloster.*

EDMUND, *bastard son to Gloster.*

CURAN, *a courtier.*

Old Man, tenant to Gloster.

Physician.

Fool.

OSWALD, *steward to Goneril.*

An Officer, employed by Edmund.

Gentleman, attendant on Cordelia.

A Herald.

Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL,
REGAN,
CORDELIA, } *daughters to Lear.*

*Knights attending on the King, Officers, Messengers,
Soldiers, and Attendants.*

Scene, Britain.

KING LEAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room of State in King Lear's Palace.*

Enter KENT, GLOSTER, and EDMUND.

Kent. I THOUGHT, the king had more affected the duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom,^a it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weigh'd, that curiosity^b in neither can make choice of either's moiety.^c

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed; and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.^d

Glo. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year^e

^a — in the division of the kingdom,] There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The king has already divided his kingdom, and yet when he enters he examines his daughters, to discover in what proportions he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloster only were privy to his design, which he still kept in his own hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him.—JOHNSON.

^b — curiosity—] i. e. *Scrupulousness, or exactest scrutiny.*

^c — of either's moiety.] The strict sense of the word *moiety* is *half, one of two equal parts*: but Shakspeare commonly uses it for *any part or division*.—STEEVENS.

^d — proper.] i. e. *Handsome.*

^e — some year—] i. e. *About a year.*

elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.—Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glo. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again:—The king is coming. [*Trumpets sound within.*]

Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloster.

Glo. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOSTER and EDMUND.]

Lear. Mean-time we shall express our darker purpose.^f Give me the map there.—Know, that we have divided, In three, our kingdom: and, 'tis our fast intent^g To shake all cares and business from our age; Conferring them on younger strengths, while we Unburden'd crawl toward death.—Our son of Cornwall, And you, our no less loving son of Albany, We have this hour a constant will^h to publish Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife May be prevented now. The princes, France and Bur- Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love, [*gundy,* Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn, And here are to be answer'd.—Tell me, my daughters,

^f —express our darker purpose.] *Darker is more secret.* The sense is, We have already made known in some measure our desire of parting the kingdom; we will now discover what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition. This interpretation will justify or palliate the exordial dialogue.—JOHNSON.

^g —fast intent—] i. e. *Determined resolution.*

^h —constant will—] *Constant is firm, determined.* *Constant will* is the *certa voluntas* of Virgil.—STEVENS.

(Since now we will divest us, both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,)
Which of you, shall we say, doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where merit doth most challenge it.—Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon.

Sir, I

Do love you more than words can wield the matter,
Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour:
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found.
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so muchⁱ I love you.

Cor. What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

[*Aside.*

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,^k
With plenteous rivers and wide skirted meads,
We make thee lady: To thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual.—What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find, she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short,—that^l I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense^m possesses;
And find, I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cor.

Then poor Cordelia! [*Aside.*

And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee, and thine, hereditary ever,
Remains this ample third of our fair kingdom;

ⁱ *Beyond all manner of so much—*] Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you beyond limits, and cannot say it is *so much*, for how much soever I should name, it would yet be more.—JOHNSON.

^k *— rich'd—*] For *enriched*.—M. MASON.

^l *— that—*] For *in that*; i. e. *inasmuch as*.—MALONE.

^m *— square of sense—*] i. e. *The full complement of all the senses*.—EDWARDS.

No less in space, validity,ⁿ and pleasure,
 Than that conferred^o on Goneril.—Now, our joy,
 Although the last, not least; to whose young love
 The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,
 Strive to be interest'd;^p what can you say, to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing: speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
 According to my bond; nor more, nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia? mend your speech a little,
 Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
 You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
 Return those duties back as are right fit,
 Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
 Why have my sisters husbands, if they say,
 They love you, all? Haply, when I shall wed,
 That lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
 Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all.

Lear. But goes this with thy heart?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so,—Thy truth then be thy dower:
 For, by the sacred radiance of the sun;
 The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
 By all the operations of the orbs,
 From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

ⁿ — validity,] i.e. *Worth, value*.

^o — conferred—] This is the correct reading of the folio. Steevens reads after the quarto, *confirm'd on*; which, as M. Mason observes, is false English: we confer *on* a person, but we confirm *to* him.

^p — interest'd:] From *to interesse*, the original form of *to interest*; from *interester*, Fr.—NARES.

Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee, from this,^a for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation^r messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege,—

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath:
I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight!—

[*To CORDELIA.*

So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her!—Call France;—Who stirs?
Call Burgundy.—Cornwall, and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty.—Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;^s
The sway,
Revenue, execution of the rest,^t
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you. [*Giving the Crown.*

Kent. Royal Lear,

Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,

^a — from this,] i. e. From this time.—STEEVENS.

^r — generation—] i. e. His children.—MALONE.

^s — all the additions to a king;] All the titles belonging to a king.—MALONE.

^t — execution of the rest,] i. e. All the other business.—JOHNSON.

When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man?
Think'st thou, that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's
bound,

When majesty stoop to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And, in thy best consideration, check
This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sound
Reverbs^u no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.^x

Lear. Now, by Apollo,—

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]

Alb. Corn. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do;
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee, thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance hear me!—
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
(Which we durst never yet,) and, with strain'd pride,
To come betwixt our sentence and our power;
(Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,)
Our potency made good,^y take thy reward.

^u *Reverbs*—] i. e. *Reverberates*. This contraction is supposed to be peculiar to Shakespeare.—NARES.

^x *The true blank*—] i. e. The white or exact mark at which the arrow is shot. See better, says Kent, and keep me always in your view.—JOHNSON.

^y *Our potency made good*,] i. e. They to whom I have yielded my power and authority, yielding me the ability to dispense it in this instance, take thy reward.—STEEVENS.

Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world ;
And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom : if, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death : Away ! by Jupiter,^z
This shall not be revok'd.

Kent. Fare thee well, king : since thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.—
The gods to their dear shelter take thee maid,

[*To CORDELIA.*

That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said !—
And your large speeches may your deeds approve,

[*To REGAN and GONERIL.*

That good effects may spring from words of love.—
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu ;
He'll shape his old course^a in a country new. [Exit.

*Re-enter GLOSTER ; with FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and
Attendants.*

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter ; What, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?^p

Bur. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so ;
But now her price is fall'n : Sir, there she stands ;
If aught within that little, seeming^q substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,

^z — by Jupiter,] Shakspeare makes his Lear too much a mythologist : he had Hecate and Apollo before.—JOHNSON.

^a He'll shape his old course—] He will follow his old maxims ; he will continue to act upon the same principles.—JOHNSON.

^p — quest of love?] i. e. Amorous expedition. The term originated from Romance. A quest was the expedition in which a knight was engaged.—STEEVENS.

^q — seeming—] i. e. Specious.

And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur.

I know no answer.

Lear. Sir,

Will you, with those infirmities she owes,^r
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur.

Pardon me, royal sir;

Election makes not up on such conditions.^s

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made
I tell you all her wealth.—For you, great king, [me,
[*To FRANCE.*

I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way,
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France.

This is most strange!

That she, that even now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour! Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall into taint:^t which to believe of her,
Must be a faith, that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.

Cor.

I yet beseech your majesty,

(If for^u I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
I'll do't before I speak,) that you make known

^r — owes,] i. e. *Is possessed of.*

^s *Election makes not up on such conditions.] Election comes not to a decision; in the same sense as when we say, "I have made up my mind on that subject."*—MALONE.

^t — or your fore-vouch'd affection

Fall into taint:] i. e. Her offence must be monstrous, or the former affection which you possessed for her must fall into taint; that is, become the subject of reproach.—M. MASON.

^u — for—] i. e. *Because.*

It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
 No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
 That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour:
 But even for want of that, for which I am richer;
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
 That I am glad I have not, though, not to have it,
 Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear.

Better thou

Had'st not been born, than not to have pleas'd me better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature,
 Which often leaves the history unspoke,
 That it intends to do?—My lord of Burgundy,
 What say you to the lady? Love is not love,
 When it is mingled with respects, that stand
 Aloof from the entire point.* Will you have her?
 She is herself a dowry.

Bur.

Royal Lear,

Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
 And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
 Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry then, you have so lost a father,
 That you must lose a husband.

Cor.

Peace be with Burgundy!

Since that respects of fortune are his love,
 I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, thou art most rich, being poor;
 Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
 Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
 Be it lawful, I take up what's cast away.
 Gods, gods! 'tis strange, that from their cold'st neglect
 My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.—
 Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
 Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
 Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
 Shall buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.—

* — mingled with respects, that stand

Aloof from the entire point.] i.e. Mixed with considerations that have no reference to the essential point. *Entire* has the sense of *unmingled*, *single*.

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind :
Thou lovest here, a better where^y to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of her's again :—Therefore be gone,
Without our grace, our love, our benison.
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GLOSTER, and Attendants.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. Ye^z jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you : I know you what you are;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults, as they are nam'd. Use well our father :
To your profess'd^a bosoms I commit him :
But yet, alas ! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Gon. Prescribe not us our duties.

Reg.

Let your study

Be, to content your lord ; who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.^b

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited^c cunning hides ;
Who covers faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper !

France.

Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE and CORDELIA.

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say, of what most
nearly appertains to us both. I think, our father will
hence to-night.

^y *Thou lovest here, a better where—*] *Here* and *where* have the power of nouns. Thou lovest this residence to find a better residence in another place.—JOHNSON.

^z *Ye—*] Old copy *the*: but the change in the reading may be justified, as in ancient MSS. it was frequently impossible to distinguish the one word from the customary abbreviation of the other.—STEEVENS.

^a — *professed*—] for *professing*. Shakspeare often uses in this manner one participle for the other.—STEEVENS.

^b *And well are worth the want that you have wanted.*] i. e. *Are well deserving of the want of dower that you are without.*—TOLLET.

^c — *plaited—*] i. e. *Complicated, involved.*

Reg. That's most certain, and with you ; next month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is ; the observation we have made of it hath not been little : he always loved our sister most ; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off, appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age : yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash ; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition,^d but, therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and cholerick years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts we are like to have from him, as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit^e together : If our father carry authority with such dispositions, as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think of it.

Gon. We must do something, and i'the heat.^f

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Earl of Gloster's Castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a Letter.

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess ;^g to thy law
My services are bound : Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom ;^h and permit
The curiosity of nationsⁱ to deprive me,

^d — of long-engrafted condition,] i. e. Of qualities of mind, confirmed by long habit.—MALONE.

^e — let us hit—] i. e. Let us agree.—STEEVENS.

^f — i'the heat.] i. e. We must strike while the iron's hot.—STEEVENS.

^g Thou, nature, art my goddess ;] Edmund calls nature his goddess, for the same reason that we call a bastard a natural son ; one, who according to the law of nature, is the child of his father, but according to those of civil society, is nullius filius.—M. MASON.

^h Stand in the plague of custom ;] Wherefore should I acquiesce, submit tamely to the plagues and injustice of custom ?—STEEVENS.

ⁱ The curiosity of nations—] i. e. The idle strictness of civil institutions.—M. MASON.

For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
 Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
 As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
 With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
 Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
 More composition and fierce quality,
 Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed,
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
 Got 'tween asleep and wake?—Well then,
 Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund,
 As to the legitimate: Fine word,—legitimate!
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
 Shall stop the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:—
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Kent banish'd thus! And France in choler parted!
 And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd^k his power!
 Confin'd to exhibition!^l All this done
 Upon the gad!^m—Edmund! How now; what news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[Putting up the Letter.]

Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glo. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No? what needed then that terrible despatch of
 it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such
 need to hide itself. Let's see: Come, if it be nothing,
 I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from

^k — subscrib'd—] i. e. *Surrendered.*

^l — exhibition!] i. e. *Allowance.* The term is yet used in the universities.

JOHNSON.

^m Upon the gad!] i. e. *Suddenly, or, as before, while the iron is hot. A gad is an iron bar.*—RITSON.

my brother, that I have not all o'er-read ; for so much as I have perus'd, I find it not fit for your over-looking.

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glo. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glo. [reads.] *This policy, and reverence of age, makes the world bitter to the best of our times ; keeps our fortunes from us, till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond^a bondage in oppression of aged tyranny ; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar.—Humph—Conspiracy!—Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue,—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in?—When came this to you? Who brought it?*

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord, there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glo. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glo. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope, his heart is not in the contents.

Glo. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord: But I have often heard him maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glo. O villain, villain!—His very opinion in the letter!—Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain!

^a — idle and fond—] i. c. Weak and foolish.—JOHNSON.

worse than brutish!—Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him:—Abominable villain!—Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your imagination against my brother, till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where,^o if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour,^p and to no other pretence^q of danger.

Glo. Think you so?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster.

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glo. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him.—Heaven and earth!—Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him,^r I pray you; frame the business after your own wisdom: I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.^s

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey^t the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glo. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: Though the wisdom of nature^u can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and

^o — where,]—for *whereas*.

^p — to your honour,] It has been already observed, that this was the usual mode of address to a lord in Shakspeare's time.—MALONE.

^q — pretence—] i. e. *Design, purpose*.

^r — wind me into him,] A familiar phrase, like "*do me this*."—JOHNSON.

^s — I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.] i. e. He would give all he possessed to be certain of the truth; for that is the meaning of the words *to be in a due resolution*.—M. MASON.

^t — convey—] i. e. *Manage artfully*. We say of a juggler that he has a clean conveyance.—JOHNSON.

^u — the wisdom of nature—] That is, though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet we feel their consequences.—JOHNSON.

father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction ; there's son against father ; the king falls from bias of nature ; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time : Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves !—Find out this villain, Edmund : it shall lose thee nothing ; do it carefully :—And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished ! his offence, honesty !—Strange ! strange !

[Exit.

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world ! that, when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our own behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars ; as if we were villains by necessity ; fools, by heavenly compulsion ; knaves, thieves, and treachers,^x by spherical predominance ; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence ; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on : An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star ! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail : and my nativity was under *ursa major* ; so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous.—Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar—

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy ; My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam.—O, these eclipses do portend these divisions !
fa, sol, la, mi.^y

^x — treachers.] i. e. Traitors. Hence the word treachery.—NARRES.

^y — O, these eclipses do portend these divisions ! fa, sol, la, mi.] The commentators, not being musicians, have regarded this passage perhaps as unintelligible nonsense, and therefore left it as they found it, without bestowing a single conjecture on its meaning and import. Shakspeare however shows by the context that he was well acquainted with the property of these syllables in solmization, which imply a series of sounds so unnatural, that ancient musicians prohibited their use. The monkish writers on musick say, *mi contra fa est diabolus* : the interval *fa mi*, including a *tritonus*, or sharp 4th, consisting of three tones, without the intervention of a semi-tone, expressed in the modern scale by the letters F G A B, would form a musical phrase extremely disagreeable to the ear. Edmund, speaking of eclipses as portents and prodigies, compares the dislocation of events, *the times being out of joint*, to the unnatural and offensive sounds, *fa, sol, la, mi*.—DR. BURNEY.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writes of, succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him, by word, or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself, wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty, forbear his presence, till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance, till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: Pray you, go; there's my key:—If you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed; I am no honest man, if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard, but faintly; nothing like the image and horror of it: Pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.—[*Exit* EDGAR.
A credulous father, and a brother noble,

Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none ; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy !—I see the business.—
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit :
All with me's meet, that I can fashion fit. [Exit.

SCENE III.

A Room in the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter GONERIL and Steward.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool ?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night^z he wrongs me ; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That set us all at odds : I'll not endure it :
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle :—When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him ; say, I am sick :—
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well ; the fault of it I'll answer.

Stew. He's coming, madam ; I hear him. [*Horns within.*]

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows ; I'd have it come to question :
If he dislike it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities,
That he hath given away !—Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again ; and must be us'd
With checks, as flatteries,—when they are seen abus'd.^a
Remember what I have said.

Stew.

Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you ;

^z *By day and night he wrongs me,*] i. e. *Always, every way.*—STEEVENS. I have adopted the punctuation of Whalley ; Malone reads, *By day and night!* considering the words as an adjuration.

^a *Old fools are babes again ; and must be us'd*

With checks, as flatteries,—when they are seen abus'd.] i. e. When old fools will not yield to the appliances of persuasion, harsh treatment must be employed to compel their submission. When flatteries are seen to be abus'd by them, checks must be used, as the only means left to subdue them.—HENLEY.

What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
 I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
 That I may speak:—I'll write straight to my sister,
 To hold my very course:—Prepare for dinner. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Hall in the same.

Enter KENT, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
 That can my speech diffuse,^b my good intent
 May carry through itself to that full issue
 For which I raz'd my likeness.—Now, banish'd Kent,
 If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
 (So may it come!) thy master, whom thou lov'st,
 Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go, get it ready,
 [*Exit an attendant.*] How now, who art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What would'st thou
 with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve
 him truly, that will put me in trust; to love him that is
 honest; to converse with^c him that is wise, and says little;
 to fear judgment; to fight, when I cannot choose; and to
 eat no fish.^d

Lear. Who art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the
 king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject, as he is for a
 king, thou art poor enough. What would'st thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who would'st thou serve?

^b — my speech diffuse,] i. e. Disorder and so disguise my speech.—STEEVENS.

^c — to converse with,] i. e. To keep company with.—JOHNSON.

^d — and to eat no fish.] In Queen Elizabeth's time the Papists were esteemed enemies to the government. Hence the proverbial phrase of, *He's an honest man, and eats no fish*; to signify he's a friend to the government and a Protestant.—WARBURTON.

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance, which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly; that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualify'd in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing; nor so old, to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet.—Dinner, ho, dinner!—Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither:

Enter Steward.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Stew. So please you,—

[*Exit.*

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.—Where's my fool, ho?—I think the world's asleep.—How now? where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me, when I call'd him?

Knight. Sir, he answer'd me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears, as well in the general dependants, as in the duke himself also, and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mis-

taken : for my duty cannot be silent, when I think your highness is wrong'd.

Lear. Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception; I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity,^e than as a very pretence^f and purpose of unkindness : I will look further into't.—But where's my fool ? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well.—Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her.—Go you, call hither my fool.—

Re-enter Steward.

O, you sir, you sir, come you hither: Who am I, sir?

Stew. My lady's father.

Lear. My lady's father! my lord's knave: you whore-son dog! you slave! you cur!

Stew. I am none of this, my lord; I beseech you, pardon me.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me,^g you rascal?

[*Striking him.*]

Stew. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither; you base foot-ball player.

[*Tripping up his Heels.*]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away; I'll teach you differences; away, away: If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away: go to; Have you wisdom? so.

[*Pushes the Steward out.*]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.

[*Giving KENT Money.*]

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too;—Here's my coxcomb.

[*Giving KENT his Cap.*]

^e ——— *jealous curiosity,*] i. e. I believe, *punctilious jealousy.*—STEEVENS.

^f ——— *pretence*—] In Shakspeare generally signifies *design.*—STEEVENS.

^g ——— *bandy looks with me,*] A metaphor from *Tennis.*—STEEVENS.

Lear. How now, pretty knave? how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? For taking one's part that is out of favour; Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly:^h There, take my coxcomb: Why, this fellow has banish'd two of his daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.ⁱ—How, now, nuncle?^k 'Would I had two coxcombs, and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living,^l I'd keep my coxcombs myself: There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog that must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when Lady, the brach,^m may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,ⁿ
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,^o
Set less than thou throwest;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,

^h — catch cold shortly:] i. e. Be turned out of doors, and exposed to the inclemency of the weather.—FARMER.

ⁱ — my coxcomb.—] i. e. *His cap*. Minsheu, in his *Dictionary*, 1627, says, "Natural ideots and fools, have, and still do accustom themselves to weare in their cappes cockes feathers, or a hat with a neck and heade of a cocke on the top, and a bill thereon."—STEEVENS.

^k — nuncle?] A familiar contraction of *mine uncle*. The customary appellation of the licensed fool to his superiors was *uncle* or *nuncle*.—NARES.

^l — living,] i. e. *Estate*, or *property*.—MALONE.

^m — brach,] i. e. *A lurcher, a beagle, or any fine-nosed hound*. A female was usually meant.—NARES.

ⁿ Lend less than thou owest,] That is, *do not lend all that thou hast*. To owe, in old English, is to possess.—JOHNSON.

^o — trowest,] i. e. *Believest*.

And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Lear. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer ;
you gave me nothing for't : Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle ?

Lear. Why, no, boy ; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to ; he will not believe a fool. [To KENT.

Lear. A bitter fool !

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool ?

Lear. No, lad ; teach me.

Fool. That lord, that counsel'd thee

To give away thy land,

Come place him here by me,—

Or do thou for him stand :

The sweet and bitter fool

Will presently appear ;

The one in motley here,

The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy ?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away ; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, 'faith, lords and great men will not let me ; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't :^p and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself ; they'll be snatching—Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be ?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i'the middle, and

^p — if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't:] A satire on the gross abuses of monopolies at that time ; and the corruption and avarice of the courtiers, who commonly went shares with the patentee : these monopolies extended to the least as to the greatest concerns. In the books of the Stationers' Company, is the following entry : " John Charlewoode, Oct. 1587 : lycensed unto him by the whole consent of the assistants, the *onlye* ymprynting of all manner of billes for plaiers." Again, Nov. 6. 1615 ; "The liberty of printing *all* billes for fencing was granted to Mr. Purfoot."—WARBURTON and STEEVENS.

eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i'the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back over the dirt: Thou had'st little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;^a [Singing.

For wise men are grown foppish;

And know not how their wits to wear,

Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep, [Singing.

And I for sorrow sung,

That such a king should play bo-peep,

And go the fools among.

Pr'ythee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie; I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. If you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel, what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and, sometimes I'm whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind of thing, than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o'both sides, and left nothing in the middle: Here comes one o'the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter? what makes that frontlet^r on? Methinks, you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou had'st no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without

^a — *Fools had ne'er less grace in a year:*] There never was a time when fools were less in favour; and the reason is, that they were never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place. Such I think is the meaning. — JOHNSON.

^r — *that frontlet—*] A *frontlet* was a forehead-cloth, used formerly by ladies at night to render that part smooth. Lear, I suppose, means to say, that Goneril's brow was as completely covered by a frown, as it would be by a frontlet. — MALONE.

a figure: I am better than thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing.—Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face [*to Gon.*] bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,

Weary of all, shall want some.—

That's a sheal'd peascod.^s [*Pointing to LEAR.*]

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on^t
By your allowance;^u which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep;
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you trow, nuncle,

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,

That it had its head bit off by its young.

So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.^x

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir, I would, you would make use of that good wisdom whereof I know you are fraught; and put away these dispositions, which of late transform you from what you rightly are.

^s *That's a sheal'd peascod.*] i. e. Now a mere husk, which contains nothing. The outside of a king remains, but all the intrinsic parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give.—JOHNSON.

^t — *put it on*—] i. e. Promote, push forward.

^u — *allowance*;] i. e. Approbation.

^x — *were left darkling*] Shakspeare's fools are certainly copied from the life. The originals whom he copied were no doubt men of quick parts; lively and sarcastick. Though they were licensed to say anything, it was still necessary to prevent giving offence, that every thing they said should have a playful air: we may suppose therefore that they had a custom of taking off the edge of too sharp a speech by covering it hastily with the end of an old song, or any glib nonsense that came into the mind. I know no other way of accounting for the incoherent words with which Shakspeare often finishes this fool's speeches.—Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?—Whoop, Jug! I love thee.^y

Lear. Does any here know me?—Why this is not Lear: does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied.—Sleeping or waking?—Ha! sure 'tis not so.—Who is it that can tell me who I am?—Lear's shadow?^z I would learn that; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.^a

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.^b

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. Come, sir;

This admiration is much o'the favour^c
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise:
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern, or a brothel,
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: Be then desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,^d
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

^y — *Whoop Jug! I love thee.*] This, as I am informed, is a quotation from the burthen of an old song.—STEEVENS.

^z — *Lear's shadow?*] In the folio these words are given to the fool: perhaps correctly.

^a — *for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, &c.*] i. e. If I judge by the marks (i. e. ensigns) of sovereignty, which my daughters now enjoy, and which they derived from me; by my knowledge, and by my reason, I should be induced to think I had daughters, yet that must be a false persuasion; it cannot be.—M. MASON.

^b *Which they will make an obedient father.*] Which, is on this occasion used with two deviations from present language. It is referred, contrary to the rules of grammarians, to the pronoun *I*, and is employed, according to a mode now obsolete, for whom the accusative case of *who*.—STEEVENS.

^c — *o'the favour*—] i. e. *Of the complexion.*

^d — *still depend,*] i. e. *Continue in service.*—WARBURTON.

Lear. Darkness and devils!

Saddle my horses; call my train together.—

Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee;

Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents,—O, sir, are you
come?

Is it your will? [*to ALB.*] Speak, sir.—Prepare my horses.

Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,

More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,

Than the sea-monster!^e

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. Detested kite! thou liest: [*to GONERIL.*]

My train are men of choice and rarest parts,

That all particulars of duty know:

And in the most exact regard support

The worships of their name.—O most small fault,

How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!

Which, like an engine,^f wrench'd my frame of nature

From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,

And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!

Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [*Striking his head.*

And thy dear judgment out!—Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord,—Hear, nature, hear;

Dear goddess, hear! Suspend thy purpose, if

Thou didst intend to make this creature fruitful!

Into her womb convey sterility!

Dry up in her the organs of increase;

And from her derogate^g body never spring

A babe to honour her! If she must teem,

^e *Than the sea-monster!*] Mr. Upton observes, that the sea-monster is the *hippopotamus*, the hieroglyphical symbol of impiety and ingratitude. *Sandys*, in his *Travels*, says, "That he killeth his sire, and ravisheth his own dam."—
STEEVENS.

^f — *an engine,*]—here means *the rack*.

^g — *derogate*—] i. e. *Degraded, blasted.*

Create her child of spleen ; that it may live,
 And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her !
 Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth ;
 With cadent tears^b fret channels in her cheeks ;
 Turn all her mother's pains, and benefits,ⁱ
 To laughter and contempt ; that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child !—Away, away ! [Exit.

Alb. Now, gods, that we adore, whereof comes this ?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause ;
 But let his disposition have that scope
 That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers, at a clap !
 Within a fortnight ?

Alb. What's the matter, sir ?

Lear. I'll tell thee ;—Life and death ! I am asham'd
 That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus :
[To GONERIL.

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
 Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs upon
 The untented^k woundings of a father's curse [thee !
 Pierce every sense about thee !—Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck you out ;
 And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
 To temper clay.—Ha ! is it come to this ?
 Let it be so :—Yet have I left a daughter,
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable ;
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find,
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off for ever ; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

[Exeunt LEAR, KENT, and Attendants.]

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord ?

^b ——— cadent tears—] i. e. *Falling tears.*

ⁱ ——— her mother's pains and benefits,] i. e. *Her maternal cares and good offices.*
 —MALONE.

^k ——— untented—] i. e. *Unappeased* : not put into a way of cure, as a wound is when a surgeon has put a *tent* into it. A *tent* is a roll of lint employed in examining or purifying a deep wound.—NARES' *Glossary.*

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you,—

Gon. Pray you, content.—What, Oswald, ho!
You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

[*To the Fool.*

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry, and take the fool
with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter;
So the fool follows after.

[*Exit.*

Gon. This man hath had good counsel :—A hundred
knights!

'Tis politick, and safe to let him keep
At point,¹ a hundred knights. Yes, that on every dream,
Each buz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy.—Oswald, I say!—

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust too far.^m

Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart:
What he hath utter'd, I have writ my sister;
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd the unfitness.—How now, Oswald?

Enter Steward.

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse:
Inform her full of my particular fear;
And thereto add such reasons of your own,
As may compact it more.ⁿ Get you gone;

¹ *At point,*] Completely armed, and consequently ready at appointment or command on the slightest notice.—STEEVENS.

^m — *trust too far.*] So all the old copies: Steevens omits *too far*, for the sake of the metre.

ⁿ — *compact it more.*] Unite one circumstance with another, so as to make a consistent account.—JOHNSON.

And hasten your return. [*Exit Stew.*] No, no, my lord,
This milky gentleness, and course of yours,
Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attask'd^o for want of wisdom,
Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce, I cannot tell;
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then—

Alb. Well, well; the event.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Court before the same.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloster with these letters: acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know, than comes from her demand out of the letter: If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there before you.^p

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*]

Fool. If a man's brains were in his heels, wer't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I pr'ythee, be merry; thy wit shall not go slip-shod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see, thy other daughter will use thee kindly:^q for though she's as like this as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

^o — attask'd—] i. e. *Blamed.* To be at task, is to be liable to reprehension and correction.—JOHNSON.

^p — there before you.] He means the town of Gloster, which Shakspeare chose to make the residence of the duke of Cornwall and Regan, in order to give a probability to their setting out late from thence, on a visit to the earl of Gloster, whose castle our poet conceived to be in the neighbourhood of that city. Our old English earls, usually resided in the counties from whence they took their titles. Lear not finding his son-in-law, and his wife at home, follows them to the earl of Gloster's castle.—MALONE.

^q — thy other daughter will use thee kindly:] The fool uses the word *kindly* here in two senses: it means affectionately, and like the rest of her kind — M. MASON.

Fool. She will taste as like this, as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell, why one's nose stands i'the middle of his face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep his eyes on either side his nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong:—

Fool. Can'st tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature.—So kind a father!—
Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: Thou wouldest make a good fool.

Lear. To take it again perforce!—Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou should'st not have been old, before thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.

How now! are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that is maid now, and laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

[Exeunt.]

I did her wrong:] He is musing on Cordelia.—JOHNSON.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloster.*

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father; and given him notice, that the duke of Cornwall, and Regan his duchess, will be here with him to-night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not: You have heard of the news abroad; I mean, the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?^s

Edm. Not I; 'Pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may then, in time. Fare you well, sir:

[*Exit.*

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! Best! This weaves itself perforce into my business! My father hath set guard to take my brother; And I have one thing, of a queazy^t question, Which I must act:—Briefness, and fortune, work!—Brother, a word;—descend:—Brother, I say;

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches:—O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:—
Have you not spoken 'gainst the duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither; now, i'the night, i'the haste,
And Regan with him; Have you nothing said

^s — ear-kissing arguments,] i. e. Topics only treated in whispers.

^t — queazy,] i. e. Nice, tender, delicate.

Upon his party^u 'gainst the duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.^x

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming,—Pardon me:—
In cunning, I must draw my sword upon you:—
Draw: Seem to defend yourself: Now quit you well.
Yield: come before my father;—Light, ho, here!—
Fly, brother;—Torches! torches!—So farewell.—

[*Exit* EDGAR.]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion

[*Wounds his arm.*]

Of more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport.—Father! father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOSTER, and Servants with Torches.

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand his auspicious mistress:—

Glo. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could—

Glo. Pursue him, ho!—Go after.—[*Exit* Servant.] By
no means,—what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;
But that I told him, the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father:—Sir, in fine,
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
With his prepared sword, he charges home
My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm:
But when he saw my best alarm'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to the encounter,

^u Upon his party—] i. e. Upon the party formed by him.—HANMER.

^x Advise yourself.] i. e. Consider, recollect yourself.

Or whether gasted^y by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far :
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught ;
And found—Despatch.—The noble duke my master,
My worthy arch^z and patron, comes to-night :
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he, which finds him, shall deserve our thanks,
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake ;
He, that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech^a
I threaten'd to discover him : He replied,
Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal^b
Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny,
(As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character,^c) I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.

Glo. Strong^d and fasten'd villain !
Would he deny his letter?—I never got him.

[*Trumpets within.*]

Hark, the duke's trumpets ! I know not why he comes :
All ports I'll bar ; the villain shall not 'scape ;
The duke must grant me that : besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him ; and of my land,

^y — gasted—] i. e. *Frighted.*

^z — arch] i. e. *Chief* ; a word now used only in composition as *arch-angel*, *arch-duke*.—STEEVENS.

^a And fought him pight to do it, with curst speech—] *Pight* is pitched, fixed, settled. *Curst* is severe, harsh, vehemently angry.—JOHNSON.

^b — would the reposal—] i. e. Would any opinion that men have reposed in thy trust, virtue, &c.—WARBURTON.

^c My very character,] i. e. *My very handwriting.*

^d Strong—] i. e. *Determined.*

Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.^e

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend? since I came hither,
(Which I can call but now,) I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes, too short,
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

Glo. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd!

Reg. What id may father's godson seek your life!
He whom my father nam'd? your Edgar?

Glo. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?

Glo. I know not, madam:

It is too bad, too bad.—

Edm. Yes, madam, he was.

Reg. No marvel then, though he were ill affected;
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the waste and spoil of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,
That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.—
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Glo. He did bewray his practice;^f and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glo. Ay, my good lord, he is.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please.—For you, Edmund,

^e — of my land, —

To make thee capable.] i. e. Capable of succeeding to my land, notwithstanding the legal bar of thy illegitimacy.—STEEVENS.

^f — bewray his practice;] i. e. Betray his treachery. Practice is always used by Shakspeare for insidious mischief.

Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours ;
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need ;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glo. For him I thank your grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit you,—

Reg. Thus out of season ; threading dark-ey'd night.
Occasions, noble Gloster, of some poize,^g
Wherein we must have use of your advice :—
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home ;^h the several messengers
From hence attend despatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom ; and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.

Glo. I serve you, madam :
Your graces are right welcome. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.ⁱ

Before Gloster's Castle.

Enter KENT and Steward, severally.

Stew. Good dawning to thee, friend : Art of the house ?

Kent. Ay.

Stew. Where may we set our horses ?

Kent. I'the mire.

Stew. Pr'ythee, if thou love me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Stew. Why, then I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfeld,^k I would make
thee care for me.

^g — of some poize,] i. e. Of some weight or moment.

^h — from our home ;] i. e. Not at home.

ⁱ *Scene II.*] It is clear from various passages in this scene, that the morning is now just beginning to dawn, though the moon is still up, and though Kent early in the scene, calls it still night. Towards the close of it, he wishes Gloster good morrow, as the latter goes out, and immediately after calls on the sun to shine, that he may read a letter.—MALONE.

^k *Lipsbury pinfeld;*] The real origin of this phrase has escaped the inquiries

Stew. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Stew. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal, an eater of broken meat; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited,¹ hundred-pound, filthy worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd,^m action-taking knave;ⁿ a whoreson, glass-gazing,^o superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting^p slave; one that would'st be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deny'st the least syllable of thy addition.^q

Stew. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one, that is neither known of thee, nor knows thee?

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou know'st me? Is it two days ago, since I tripp'd up thy heels, and beat thee, before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, the moon shines; I'll make a sop o'the moonshine of you:^r Draw, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger,^s draw. [*Drawing his Sword.*]

Stew. Away; I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part,^t against the

of the commentators. Mr. Capel conjectures, "that it was some village famed for boxing, that the boxers fought in a ring or enclosed circle, and that this ring was called *Lipisbury pinfold*."—Unfortunately for this conjecture there is no such place as *Lipisbury*.

¹ — *three suited*,] i. e. One who has been *thrice-sued* at law, who has *three suits* for debt standing out against him.—STEEVENS.

^m — *lily-liver'd*,] i. e. Cowardly, as *white-liver'd* is still vulgarly used.—JOHNSON.

ⁿ — *action-taking knave*;] i. e. A fellow, who, if you beat him, would bring an action for the assault.—M. MASON.

^o — *glass-gazing*,] i. e. One enamoured of himself; who gazes often at his own person in a glass.—MALONE.

^p — *one-trunk-inheriting*,] i. e. Whose possessions are confined to *one coffer*, and that too inherited from his father, who was no better provided, or had nothing more to bequeath to his successor in poverty.—STEEVENS.

^q — *addition*,] i. e. *Titles*.

^r — *I'll make a sop o'the moonshine of you*,] Probably alluding to some dish so called. There was a way of dressing eggs called "Eggs in moonshine;" and a *sop of moonshine* may have been a sippet in the above dish.—NARES.

^s — *barber-monger*,] i. e. A fop who deals much with barbers to adjust his hair and beard.—M. MASON.

^t — *vanity the puppet's part*,] Alluding to the old *moralities*, or allegorical shows, in which vanity, iniquity, and other vices, were personified.—JOHNSON.

royalty of her father : Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks :—draw, you rascal : come your ways.

Stew. Help, ho ! murder ! help !

Kent. Strike, you slave ; stand, rogue, stand ; you neat slave, strike. *[Beating him.]*

Stew. Help, ho ! murder ! murder !

Enter EDMUND, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Edm. How now ? What's the matter ? *Part.*

Kent. With you, goodman boy, if you please ; come, I'll flesh you ; come on, young master.

Glo. Weapons ! arms ! What's the matter here ?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives ;
He dies, that strikes again : What is the matter ?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Corn. What is your difference ? speak.

Stew. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour.
You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee ; a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow : a tailor make a man ?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir ; a stone-cutter, or a painter, could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel ?

Stew. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd,
At suit of his grey beard,—

Kent. Thou whoreson zed ! thou unnecessary letter !^u—
My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain^x into mortar, and daub the wall of a jakes with him.—Spare my grey beard, you wagtail ?

^u — zed, thou unnecessary letter !—] So called because its place may be supplied by S, and the Roman alphabet has it not ; neither is it read in any word originally Teutonic. In Barret's *Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580, it is quite omitted, as the author affirms it to be rather a syllable than a letter. STEEVENS.

^x — this unbolted villain—] Unbolted mortar is mortar made of unsifted lime, and therefore to break the lumps it is necessary to tread it by men in wooden shoes. This unbolted villain is therefore this coarse rascal.—TOLLET.

Corn. Peace, sirrah !

You beastly knave, know you no reverence ?

Kent. Yes, sir ; but anger has a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry ?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain
Which are too intrinse^y t'unloose : smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebels ;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods ;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon^z beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
As knowing nought, like dogs, but following.—
A plague upon your epileptick visage !^a
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool ?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.^b

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow ?

Glo.

How fell you out ?

Say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy,
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave ? What's his

Kent. His countenance likes me not.^c [offence ?

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, or his, or hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain ;
I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness ; and constrains the garb,

^y — *intrinse*]—for *intrinsicate*, i. e. *Intricate*.

^z — *and turn their halcyon beaks, &c.*] The *halcyon* is the bird otherwise called the *king-fisher*. The vulgar opinion was, that this bird, if hung up, would vary with the wind, and by that means show from what point it blew.—STEEVENS.

^a — *epileptick visage* !] The frightened countenance of a man ready to fall in a fit.—JOHNSON.

^b — *Camelot*.] In Somersetshire, near Camelot, are many large moors, where are bred great quantities of geese, so that many other places are from hence supplied with quills and feathers.—HANMER.

^c — *likes me not*,] i. e. *Pleases me not*.

Quite from his nature :^d He cannot flatter, he !—
 An honest mind and plain,—he must speak truth :
 An they will take it, so ; if not, he's plain.
 These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
 Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
 Thantwenty silly^e ducking observants,
 That stretch their duties nicely.^f

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
 Under the allowance of your grand aspéct,
 Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
 On flickering^g Phœbus' front.—

Corn. What mean'st by this ?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend
 so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer : he that beguiled
 you, in a plain accent, was a plain knave : which, for my
 part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure
 to entreat me to it.^h

Corn. What was the offence you gave him ?

Stew. I never gave him any :
 It pleas'd the king his master, very late,
 To strike at me, upon his misconstruction ;
 When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
 Tripp'd me behind : being down, insulted, rail'd,
 And put upon him such a deal of man,
 That worthy'd him, got praises of the king
 For him attempting who was self-subdu'd ;
 And, in the fleshmentⁱ of this dread exploit,
 Drew on me here.

Kent. None of these rogues, and cowards,
 But Ajax is their fool.^k

^d ——— *constrains the garb,*

Quite from his nature:] Forces his *outside* or his *appearance* to something totally different from his natural disposition.—JOHNSON.

^e ——— *silly,*] i. e. Simple.

^f ——— *nicely,*] i. e. *With punctilious folly.* Niais, Fr.—STEEVENS.

^g ——— *flickering,*] i. e. *Wavering* as a flame.

^h *Though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to it.]* Though I should win you, displeased as you now are, to like me so well as to entreat me to be a knave.—JOHNSON.

ⁱ ——— *fleshment*—] A young soldier is said to flesh his sword, the first time he draws blood with it. *Fleshment*, therefore, is here metaphorically applied to the first act of service, which Kent, in his new capacity, had performed for his master.—HENLEY.

^k *But Ajax is their fool.]* i. e. *Is a fool to them.*—M. MASON.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks, ho !
 You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
 We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn :
 Call not your stocks for me : I serve the king ;
 On whose employment I was sent to you :
 You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
 Against the grace and person of my master,
 Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks :
 As I've life and honour, there shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon ! till night, my lord ; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
 You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.
[Stocks brought out.]

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
 Our sister speaks of :—Come, bring away the stocks.

Glo. Let me beseech your grace not to do so :
 His fault is much, and the good king his master
 Will check him for't : your purpos'd low correction
 Is such, as basest and contemned'st wretches,
 For pilferings and most common trespasses,
 Are punish'd with : the king must take it ill,
 That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
 Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
 To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted,
 For following her affairs.—Put in his legs.—

[KENT is put in the Stocks.¹

Come, my good lord ; away.

[Exeunt REGAN and CORNWALL.]

Glo. I am sorry for thee, friend ; 'tis the duke's pleasure,
 Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
 Will not be rubb'd, nor stopp'd :^m I'll entreat for thee.

¹ It should be remembered, that formerly in great houses, as still in some colleges, there were moveable *stocks* for the correction of the servants.—FARMER.

^m — rubb'd nor stopp'd :] Metaphor from bowling.—WARBURTON.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I have watch'd, and travell'd
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle. [hard;
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

Glo. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

[*Exit.*

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common saw!^a
Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter!—Nothing almost sees miracles,
But misery;—I know, 'tis from Cordelia;
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state,—seeking to give
Losses their remedies:^o—All weary and o'er-watch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more; turn thy wheel!
[*He sleeps.*

SCENE III.

A part of the Heath.

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd;
And, by the happy hollow of a tree,
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free; no place,
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. While I may scape,
I will preserve myself: and am bethought

^a *Good king, that must approve the common saw! &c.]* The saw alluded to, is in Heywood's *Dialogues on Proverbs*,

“In your running from him to me, ye runne
Out of God's blessing into the warme sunne.”

i. e. *from good to worse.*—TYRWHITT and MALONE.

^o — and shall find time

From this enormous state,—seeking to give

Losses their remedies:] i. e. “I shall gain time from this enormous state,
(i. e. my strange disguise and situation,) which time I shall employ in seeking
to remedy our present losses.”—To be dressed like a clown, and condemn'd
to the stocks, was an enormous state indeed for a man of Kent's birth.—M. MASON.

To take the basest and most poorest shape,
 That ever penury, in contempt of man,
 Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
 Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots;^p
 And with presented nakedness out-face
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars,^q who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks,^r nails, sprigs of rosemary;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting^s villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
 Sometime with lunatick bans,^t sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity.—Poor Turlygood!^u poor Tom!
 That's something yet;—Edgar I nothing am.^x [Exit.

SCENE IV.

Before Gloster's Castle.

Enter LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange, that they should so depart from home,
 And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
 The night before there was no purpose in them
 Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

^p — *elf all my hair in knots;*] Hair thus knotted, was vulgarly supposed to be the work of *elves* and *fairies* in the night.—STEEVENS.

^q *Of Bedlam beggars,*] “He swears he has been in *Bedlam*, and will talke frantickly of purpose: you see *pinnes* stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his *armes*, which pain he gladly puts himselfe to, only to make you believe he is out of his wits. He calls himselfe by the name of *poor Tom*, and comming near any body cries out, *Poor Tom is a-cold.*” Decker's *Bell-man of London*, 5th. edit. 1640. The above description is of a species of impostors whom the author calls *Abraham-Men*.—STEEVENS.

^r — *wooden pricks,*] i. e. *Skewers*.

^s — *pelting,*] i. e. *Petty*. ^t — *bans,*] i. e. *Curses*. To *ban* is to *curse*.

^u — *Turlygood,*] A name for a sort of beggar described in the preceding lines.—I cannot persuade myself that this word, however similar in meaning, has any real connexion with *Turlupin* (a kind of naked beggar common in the fourteenth century), notwithstanding the authority of Warburton and Douce. It seems to be an original English term, being too remote in form from the other, to be a corruption from it.—NARES' *Glossary*.

^x — *Edgar I nothing am.*] i. e. I retain nothing of my former self:—I am no longer Edgar.—

Lear. How !

Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime ?

Kent.

No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha ; look ! he wears cruel garters !^y Horses are tied by the heads ; dogs, and bears, by the neck ; monkees by the loins, and men by the legs : when a man is over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.^z

Lear. What's he, that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here ?

Kent.

It is both he and she,

Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no ; they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't ;

They could not, would not do't ; 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage :^a

Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou might'st deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent.

My lord, when at their home,

I did commend your highness' letters to them,

Ere I was risen from the place that show'd

My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,

Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth

From Goneril his mistress, salutations ;

Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,^b

Which presently they read : on whose contents,

^y — *cruel garters!*] Probably a quibble was here intended. *Cruel* signifies *worsted*, of which stockings, garters, night-caps, &c. are made.—STEEVENS.

^z — *nether-stocks.*] The old word for *stockings*.—STEEVENS.

^a *To do upon respect such violent outrage:*] i. e. To violate the venerable character of a messenger from the king.—JOHNSON.

^b — *spite of intermission,*] i. e. Without pause, without suffering time to intervene.—STEEVENS.

They summon'd up their meiny,^c straight took horse;
 Commanded me to follow, and attend
 The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
 And meeting here the other messenger,
 Whose welcome, I perceiv'd, had poison'd mine,
 (Being the very fellow that of late
 Display'd so saucily against your highness,)
 Having more man than wit about me, drew;
 He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries:
 Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
 The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

Fathers, that wear rags,
 Do make their children blind;
 But fathers, that bear bags,
 Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant whore,
 Ne'er turns the key to the poor.—

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours^d for thy daughters, as thou can'st tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother^e swells up toward my heart!
Hysterica passio! down, thou climbing sorrow,
 Thy elements below!—Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not;
 Stay here. [Exit.

Gent. Made you no more offence than what you speak of?

Kent. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i'the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

^c — meiny,] i. e. Family. *Mesnie*, Fr.

^d — dolours—] Quibble between *dolours* and *dollars*.—HANMER.

^e O, how this mother, &c.] *Lear* here affects to pass off the swelling of his heart ready to burst with grief and indignation, for the disease called the *Mother*, or *Hysterica passio*, which, in our author's time, was not thought peculiar to women only.—PERCY.

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring in the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty, but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold, when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again; I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain,

And follows but for form,

Will pack, when it begins to rain,

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool, that runs away;

The fool no knave, perdy.^f

Kent. Where learn'd you this, fool?

Fool. Not i'the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?

They have travell'd hard to-night? Mere fetches;

The images of revolt and flying off!

Fetch me a better answer.

Glo.

My dear lord,

You know the fiery quality of the duke;

How unremoveable and fix'd he is

In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!—

Fiery? what quality? why, Gloster, Gloster,

I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall, and his wife.

^f *The knave turns fool, that runs away;*

The fool no knave, perdy.] I think the passage is erroneous, though both the copies concur. The sense will be mended if we read:

The fool turns knave, that runs away;

The knave no fool, perdy.

That I stay with the king is a proof that I am a fool; the wise men are deserting him. There is knavery in this desertion, but there is no folly.—
JOHNSON. *Perdy* is a corruption of *par dieu*.

Glo. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Glo. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:

Are they inform'd of this?—My breath and blood!—

Fiery? the fiery duke?—Tell the hot duke, that—

No, but not yet:—may be, he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office,

Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves,

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;

And am fallen out with my more headier will,

To take the indispos'd and sickly fit

For the sound man.—Death on my state! wherefore

[*Looking on Kent.*

Should he sit here? This act persuades me,

That this remotion^g of the duke and her

Is practice^h only. Give me my servant forth:

Go, tell the duke and his wife, I'd speak with them,

Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum,

Till it cry—*Sleep to death.*ⁱ

Glo. I'd have all well betwixt you. [*Exit.*

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart!—but, down.

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels, when she put them i'the paste alive; she rapp'd 'em o'the coxcombs with a stick, and cry'd, *Down, wantons, down:* 'Twas her brother, that, in pure kindness to his horse, butter'd his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and *Servants.*

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn.

Hail to your grace!

[*KENT is set at liberty.*

^g — *this remotion*—] From their own house to that of the earl of Gloster.—MALONE.

^h — *practice*—] i. e. *Deceit*. This word is commonly used in an ill sense by the writers of Shakspeare's time.

ⁱ — *Sleep to death.*] i. e. I'll beat the drum till it cries out—*Let them awake no more; let their present sleep be their last.*—STEEVENS.

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so : if thou should'st not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepúlch'ring an adultress.—O, are you free?

[*To KENT.*

Some other time for that.—Beloved Regan, Thy sister's naught : O Regan, she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here,—

[*Points to his Heart.*

I can scarce speak to thee : thou'lt not believe, Of how deprav'd a quality—O Regan !

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience ; I have hope, You less know how to value her desert, Than she to scant her duty.^k

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think, my sister in the least Would fail her obligation : If, sir, perchance, She have restrain'd the riots of your followers, 'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end, As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her !

Reg. O, sir, you are old ; Nature in you stands on the very verge Of her confine : you should be rul'd, and led By some discretion, that discerns your state Better than you yourself : Therefore, I pray you, That to our sister you do make return ; Say, you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness ?

Do you but mark how this becomes the house ?^l

Dear daughter, I confess that I am old ;

Age is unnecessary :^m on my knees I beg, [Kneeling.

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

^k — I have hope,
You less know how to value her desert,
Than she to scant her duty.] The sense is, “ I have hope that you are more

ignorant of her merits, than she is ignorant of any inclination to neglect her duty.” The sense is most inaccurately expressed, to scant is to be deficient in.

^l — the house ?] i. e. The order of families, duties of relation.—WARBURTON.

^m Age is unnecessary:] i. e. Old people are useless.

Reg. Good sir, no more ; these are unsightly tricks :
Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan :
She hath abated me of half my train ;
Look'd black upon me ; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart :—
All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top ! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness !

Corn. Fye, fye, fye !

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes ! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride !

Reg. O the blest gods !
So will you wish on me, when the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse ;
Thy tender-heftedⁿ nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness ; her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort, and not burn : 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,^o
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in : thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;
Thy half o'the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.

[*Trumpets within.*]

Lear. Who put my man i'the stocks ?

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Enter Steward.

Reg. I know't, my sister's : this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.—Is your lady come ?

ⁿ — tender-hefted—] i. e. Moved with tenderness. Hefted is the same as heaved.—NARES.

^o — to scant my sizes,[i. e. To contract my allowances. Sizes are certain portions of bread, beer, or other victuals, which in publick societies are set down to the account of particular persons. The word is still used in colleges.—JOHNSON and STEEVENS.

Lear. This is a slave whose easy borrowed pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows :
Out, varlet, from my sight!

Corn. What means your grace?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good
hope
Thou didst not know of't.—Who comes here? Oh, heavens,

Enter GONERIL.

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow^p obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!
Art not asham'd to look upon this beard?

[*To GONERIL.*

O, Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence, that indiscretion finds,
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O, sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold?—How came my man i'the stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserv'd much less advancement.^a

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.^r
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o'the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch!—Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took

^p Allow—] i. e. Approve.—UPTON.

^a Deserv'd much less advancement.] Cornwall means that Kent's disorders had entitled him even to a post of less honour than the stocks.—STEEVENS.

^r — being weak, seem so.] Since you are so weak, be content to think yourself weak.—JOHNSON.

Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
 To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
 To keep base life afoot:—Return with her?
 Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter^s
 To this detested groom. [*Looking on the Steward.*]

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me mad;
 I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
 We'll no more meet, no more see one another:—
 But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
 Or, rather, a disease that's in my flesh,
 Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
 A plague-sore, an embossed^s carbuncle,
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
 Mend, when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:
 I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
 I, and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so, sir;
 I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
 For your fit welcome: Give ear, sir, to my sister;
 For those that mingle reason with your passion,
 Must be content to think you old, and so—
 But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken now?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir: What, fifty followers?
 Is it not well? What should you need of more?
 Yea, or so many? sith that both charge and danger
 Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
 Should many people, under two commands,
 Hold amity? 'Tis hard: almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
 From those that she call servants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to
 slack you,

^s — and sumpter—] i. e. A horse that carries necessities on a journey, though sometimes used for the case to carry them in.—STEVENS.

^s — embossed—] i. e. Swelling, protuberant.

We could control them : If you will come to me,
(For now I spy a danger,) I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty ; to no more
Will I give place, or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries ;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number : What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan ? said you so ?

Reg. And speak it again, my lord ; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
When others are more wicked ; not being the worst,
Stands in some rank of praise :—I'll go with thee ;

[To GONERIL.

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord ;

What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Have a command to tend you ?

Reg. What need one ?

Lear. O, reason not the need : our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous :
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's : thou art a lady ;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm.—But, for true need,—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need !
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely ; touch me with noble anger !
O, let not woman's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks !—No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be

The terrors of the earth. You think, I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep :—

I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep :—O, fool, I shall go mad!

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOSTER, KENT, and Fool.

Corn. Let us withdraw, 'twill be a storm.

[*Storm heard at a distance.*

Reg.

This house

Is little; the old man and his people cannot
Be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; he hath put
Himself from rest, and must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purpos'd.
Where is my lord of Gloster?

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth :—he is return'd.

Glo. The king is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going?

Glo. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glo. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, sir, to wilful men,
The injuries, that they themselves procure,
Must be their schoolmasters: Shut up your doors;
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to,^h being apt
To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night;
My Regan counsels well: come out o'the storm. [*Exeunt.*

^h — incense him to,] i. e. Move him to.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Heath.*

A Storm is heard, with Thunder and Lightning. Enter KENT, and a Gentleman, meeting.

Kent. Who's here, beside foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you; Where's the king?

Gent. Contending with the fretful element :

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,¹
That things might change, or cease : tears his white hair;
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of :
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear^k would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him ?

Gent. None but the fool ; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you ;

And dare, upon the warrant of my art,¹
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall ;
Who have (as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high ?) servants, who seem no less ;
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state ; what hath been seen.

¹ — *the main,*] i. e. The main land, the continent.

^k — *the cub-drawn bear—*] i. e. *Whose dugs are drawn dry by its young.* As no animals leave their dens by night but for prey ; the meaning is, that even hunger and the support of her young, would not force the bear to leave her den in such a night.—WARBURTON.

¹ — *the warrant of my art,*] On the strength of my skill in physiognomy.—SIEEVENS.

Either in snuffs and packingsⁿ of the dukes ;
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
 Against the old king ; or something deeper,
 Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings ;^o
 But, true it is, from France there comes a power
 Into this scatter'd kingdom ; who already,
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet^p
 In some of our best ports, and are at point
 To show their open banner.—Now to you :
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
 Some that will thank you, making just report
 Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
 The king hath cause to plain.
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding ;
 And from some knowledge and assurance, offer
 This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent.

No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more
 Than my out wall, open this purse, and take
 What it contains ; If you shall see Cordelia,
 (As fear not but you shall,) show her this ring ;
 And she will tell you who your fellow is
 That yet you do not know. Fye on this storm !
 I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand : Have you no more to say ?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet ;
 That, when we have found the king, (in which your pain
 That way ; I'll this :) he that first lights on him,
 Holla the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ⁿ *Either in snuffs and packings—*] *Snuffs* are dislikes, and *packings* underhand contrivances.—STEEVENS.

^o *—furnishings ;*] i. e. *External pretences*, or perhaps *samples*.

^p *—have secret feet—*] i. e. *Secret footing*.

SCENE II.

Another part of the Heath. Storm continues.

Enter LEAR and FOOL.

Lear. Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts, and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing^a fires,
Vaunt couriers^r to oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o'the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill^s at once,
That make ingrateful man!

Fool. O, nuncle, court holy-water^t in a dry house is
better than this rain-water out o'door. Good nuncle, in,
and ask thy daughters' blessing; here's a night pities
neither wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyfull! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription;^u why then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man:—
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles, 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool. He that has a house to put his head in, has a
good head-piece.

^a — *thought-executing*—] Doing execution with rapidity equal to thought.
—JOHNSON.

^r *Vaunt couriers*—] *Avant couriers*, Fr. This phrase is not unfamiliar to
the writers of Shakspeare's time. It originally meant the foremost scouts of
an army.—STEEVENS.

^s — *spill*—] i. e. *Destroy*.—STEEVENS.

^t — *court holy-water*—] i. e. *Fair words*: the expression is proverbial.—
Ray's Proverbs, p. 184.

^u — *subscription*;] i. e. *Obedience, submission*.

*The cod-piece that will house,
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse;—
So beggars marry many.^x*

*The man that makes his toe
What he is heart should make,
Shall of a corn cry woe,^y
And turn his sleep to wake.*

—for there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass.

Enter KENT.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience, I will say nothing.

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry here's grace, and a cod-piece; that's a wise man, and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night, Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies Gallow^z the very wanderers of the dark, And make them keep their caves: Since I was man, Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder, Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry The affliction, nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods, That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads, Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch, That hast within thee undivulged crimes, Unwhipp'd of justice: Hide thee, thou bloody hand; Thou perjur'd, and thou simular man of virtue, Thou art incestuous: Caitiff, to pieces shake, That under covert and convenient seeming^a Hast practis'd on man's life!—Close pent-up guilts,

^x *So beggars marry many.*] i. e. So many beggars marry, before they have houses to put their heads in.—M. MASON.

^y *—of a corn cry woe,*] i. e. Be pained by.—MALONE.

^z *Gallow—*] i. e. Scare or frighten, a west-country word.—WARBURTON.

^a *—convenient seeming—*] i. e. Appearance such as may promote his purpose to destroy.—JOHNSON.

Rive your concealing continents,^b and cry
These dreadful summoners^c grace.—I am a man,
More sinn'd against, than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed!

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest;
Repose you there: while I to this hard house,
(More hard than is the stone whereof 'tis rais'd;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in,) return, and force
Their scant'd courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy; How dost, my boy? Art cold?
I am cold myself.—Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel,
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. *He that has a little tiny wit,—
With heigh, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit;
For the rain it raineth every day.*

Lear. True, my good boy.—Come, bring us to this
hovel. [*Exeunt LEAR and KENT.*]

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtezán.—
I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No hereticks burn'd, but wenches' suitors;^d
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i'the field;
And bawds and whores do churches build;—

^b — continents,] i. e. Those things which contain or inclose.—JOHNSON.

^c — summoners—] i. e. The officers that summon offenders before a proper tribunal.—STEEVENS.

^d — burn'd, but wenches' suitors;] The disease to which wenches' suitors are particularly exposed was called the *breuning* or *burning*.—JOHNSON.

Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion.
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make ; for I live before his
time. [Exit.

SCENE III.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter GLOSTER and EDMUND.

Glo. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing : when I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house ; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edm. Most savage, and unnatural !

Glo. Go to ; say you nothing : There is division between the dukes ; and a worse matter than that : I have received a letter this night ; 'tis dangerous to be spoken ;—I have locked the letter in my closet : these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home ; there is part of a power already footed : we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him : go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived : If he ask for me, I am ill, and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund ; pray you, be careful. [Exit.

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke Instantly know ; and of that letter too :—
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses ; no less than all :
The younger rises, when the old doth fall. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

A part of the Heath, with a Hovel.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. *[Storm still.]*

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I'd rather break mine own: Good my lord, enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious
Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee; *[storm]*
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear:
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i'the mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
Save what beats there.—Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
For lifting food to't?—But I will punish home:—
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night
To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure:—
In such a night as this! O, Regan, Goneril!—
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all—
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that,—

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Pr'ythee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease;
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more.—But I'll go in;
In, boy; go first.—*[To the Fool.]* You houseless poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.—
[Fool goes in.]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you

From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physick, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

Edg. [*within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half!

Poor Tom! [*The Fool runs out from the Hovel.*]

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.

Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand.—Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit; he says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i'the
Come forth. [straw?

Enter EDGAR, disguised as a Madman.

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me!—
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.—
Humph! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the
foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame,^d through
ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire; that hath laid
knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set rats-
bane by his porridge;^e made him proud of heart, to ride
on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course
his own shadow for a traitor:—Bless thy five wits!^g Tom's
a-cold.—O, do de, do de, do de.—Bless thee from whirl-
winds, star-blasting, and taking!^h Do poor Tom some
charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: There could I have
him now,—and there,—and there,—and there again, and
there. [*Storm continues.*]

^e ——— *through fire and through flame,*] Alluding to the *ignis fatuus*, supposed to be lights kindled by mischievous beings to lead travellers into destruction.—JOHNSON.

^f ——— *laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew, &c.*] He recounts the temptations by which he was prompted to suicide; the infernal spirits are always represented as urging the wretched to self-destruction.—JOHNSON and STEEVENS.

^g ——— *thy five wits!*] i. e. *The five senses.* So called by all our old writers.—PERCY.

^h ——— *taking!*] i. e. *Striking with malignant influence, or blasting.*—JOHNSON.

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?—

Could'st thou save nothing? Did'st thou give them all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

Lear. Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd nature To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters.—

Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?

Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot

Those pelican daughters.ⁱ

Edg. Pillicock sat on pillicock's-hill;—

Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edg. Take heed o'the foul fiend: Obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array: Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edg. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap,^k served the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one, that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it: Wine loved I deeply; dice, dearly; and in woman, out-paramoured the Turk: False of heart, light of ear,^l bloody of hand; Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes, nor the rustling of silks, betray thy poor heart to women: Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets,^m thy

ⁱ — *pelican daughters.*] The young pelican is fabled to suck the mother's blood.—JOHNSON.

^k — *wore gloves in my cap.*] It was anciently the custom to wear gloves in the hat on three distinct occasions, viz. as a favour of a mistress; the memorial of a friend; and as a mark to be challenged by an enemy.—STEEVENS.

^l — *light of ear.*] *Credulous of evil*, ready to receive malicious reports.—JOHNSON.

^m — *plackets.*] i. e. Petticoats.—NARFS.

pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.—Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind: Says suum, mun, ha no nonny, dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa;ⁿ let him trot by. [Storm still continues.

Lear. Why, thou were better in thy grave, than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies.—Is man no more than this? Consider him well: Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume:—Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated!—Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings: Come; unbutton here.— [Tearing off his Clothes.

Fool. Pr'ythee, nuncle, be contented; this is a naughty night to swim in.—Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest of his body cold.—Look, here comes a walking fire.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet:^o he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock;^p he gives the web and the pin,^q squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Saint Withold footed thrice the wold;
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,^r
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!*^s

ⁿ — sessa;] i. e. Be quiet, from the French *cessez*. This conjecture respecting the origin and meaning of this word is Dr. Johnson's, and is approved by Archdeacon Nares, in his Glossary.

^o Flibbertigibbet:] "Frateretto, Fliberdigibet, Hoberdidance, Tocobatto, were four devils of the round or morrice. . . . These four had forty assistants under them, as themselves doe confesse." Harsnet's *Declaration*, p. 49.—PERCY.

^p — he begins at curfew, &c.] It is an old tradition that spirits were relieved from the confinement in which they were held during the day, at the time of curfew, i. e. at the close of day, and were permitted to wander at large till the first cock-crowing.—MALONE.

^q — web and the pin,] Diseases of the eye.—JOHNSON.

^r Saint Withold, &c.] i. e. Saint Withold traversing the *wold* or *downs*, met the night-mare; he obliged her to *alight* from those persons whom she rides, and *plight her troth* to do no more mischief. This is taken from a story of him in his legend. *Her ninefold* means her nine familiars.—WARBURTON and MALONE.

^s — aroint thee!] i. e. Stand off. The word is still in use in Cheshire.—NARES.

Kent. How fares your grace ?

Enter GLOSTER, with a Torch.

Lear. What's he ?

Kent. Who's there ? what is't you seek ?

Glo. What are you there ? Your names ?

Edg. Poor Tom ; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt, and the water ;^t that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats crowdung for sallets ; swallows the old rat, and the ditch-dog ; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool ; who is whipped from tything to tything,^u and stocked, punished, and imprisoned ; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear,—

*But mice and rats and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.^x*

Beware my follower :—Peace, Smolkin ;^y peace, thou fiend !

Glo. What, hath your grace no better company ?

Edg. The prince of darkness is a gentleman ;
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.^z

Glo. Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile,
That it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glo. Go in with me ; my duty cannot suffer^a
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands :
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you ;
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

^t — *the water ;*] i. e. The water-newt.

^u — *whipped from tything to tything,*] A *tything* is a division of a place, a district ; the same in the country, as a ward in the city. In the Saxon times every hundred was divided into *tythings*.—STEEVENS.

^x This distich is from the old metrical romance of *Sir Bevis*.—PERCY.

^y — *Smolkin ;*] “ The names of other punie spirits cast out of Trayford were these : Hilco, Smolkin, Hillio, &c.” *Harsnet*, p. 49.—PERCY.

^z *The prince of darkness is a gentleman ;*

Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.] These lines which appear to be spoken in resentment of what Gloster has just said,—“ Has your grace no better company ? ” are nearly the same as the concluding lines of an old catch, which is introduced by Sir John Suckling in *The Goblins*. It was most probably not his production, but the original here referred to by Edgar. *Modo* and *Mahu* are names of spirits of great power mentioned in *Harsnet's Declaration*.—STEEVENS and REED.

^a — *cannot suffer*—] i. e. Cannot suffer me.—M. MASON.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher :—
What is the cause of thunder ?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer ;
Go into the house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban :—
What is your study ?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Impórtune him once more to go, my lord,
His wits begin to unsettle.

Glo. Can'st thou blame him ?
His daughters seek his death : Ah, that good Kent !—
He said it would be thus :—Poor banish'd man !—
Thou say'st, the king grows mad ; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself : I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood : he sought my life,
But lately, very late ; I lov'd him, friend,—
No father his son dearer : true to tell thee,

[*Storm continues.*]

The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night's this !
I do beseech your grace,—

Lear. O, cry you mercy,
Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glo. In, fellow, there, to the hovel : keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him ;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, sooth him ; let him take the fellow.

Glo. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on ; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glo. No words, no words :
Hush.

Edg. *Child Rowland^b to the dark tower came,*

His word was still,—Fie, foh, and fum,

I smell the blood of a British man. [Exeunt.

^b *Child Rowland*—] The word *child* (however it came to have this sense) is often applied to *knights*, &c. in old historical songs and romances.—PERCY.

SCENE V.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.**Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND.**Corn.* I will have my revenge, ere I depart his house.*Edm.* How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.*Corn.* I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit,^c set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.*Edm.* How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!*Corn.* Go with me to the duchess.*Edm.* If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.*Corn.* True, or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloster. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.*Edm.* [*aside.*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicions more fully.—I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.*Corn.* I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

*A Chamber in a Farm-House, adjoining the Castle.**Enter GLOSTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool, and EDGAR.**Glo.* Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully: I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.^c *Provoking merit,*] i. e. A merit he felt in himself, which irritated him against a father that had none.—M. MASON.

Kent. All the power of his wits has given way to his impatience.—The gods reward your kindness!

[*Exit GLOSTER.*]

Edg. Frateretto calls me; and tells me, Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness.^d Pray, innocent,^e and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Pr'ythee, nuncle, tell me, whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No; he's a yeoman, that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman, that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hizzing in upon them:—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad, that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health,^f a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done, I will arraign them straight:— Come, sit thou there, most learned justicer;—

[*To EDGAR.*]

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. [*To the Fool.*—Now, you she foxes!—

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares!— Wantest thou eyes?

Lear. At trial, madam?^g

Edgar. Come o'er the bourn,^h Bessy, to me:—

Fool. Her boat hath a leak,

And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. *Hopdance* cries in Tom's belly for two

^d *Frateretto*—Nero, &c.] *Frateretto* is one of the devils mentioned by Harshnet.—Nero is introduced at least 800 years before he was born.—MALONE.

^e — Pray, innocent,] Perhaps he is here addressing the fool. Fools were anciently called innocents.—STEEVENS.

^f *A horse's health:*] A horse is above all other animals subject to diseases.—JOHNSON. Warburton and Ritson propose reading *heels* for *health*.

^g — At trial, madam?] These words, on the authority of Dr. Johnson, I have given to Lear. In the old copy they are attributed to Edgar.

^h — bourn,] i.e. A rivulet.

white herring.ⁱ Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd:
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first:—Bring in the evidence.—
Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;—

[To EDGAR.

And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, [To the Fool.
Bench by his side;—You are of the commission,

Sit you too. [To KENT.

Edg. Let us deal justly.

Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shephérð?

Thy sheep be in the corn;

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,^k

Thy sheep shall take no harm.

Pur! the cat is grey.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress; Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim
What store her heart is made of.—Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire!—Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity!—Sir, where is the patience now,
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting. [Aside.

Lear. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them:—Avaunt, you curs!

ⁱ *White herzing,*] i. e. *Pickled herrings.*—STEEVENS.

^k — *minikin mouth,*] *Minikin* was anciently a term of endearment.—STEEVENS.

Be thy mouth or black or white,
 Tooth that poisons if it bite;
 Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,
 Hound, or spaniel, brach, or lym;¹
 Or bobtail tike,^m or trundle-tail;ⁿ
 Tom will make them weep and wail:
 For, with throwing thus my head,
 Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa.^o Come, march to wakes and
 fairs, and market towns:—Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.^p

Lear. Then let them anatomize to Regan, see what
 breeds about her heart: Is there any cause in nature, that
 makes these hard hearts?—You, sir, I entertain you for
 one of my hundred; only, I do not like the fashion of
 your garments: you will say, they are Persian attire; but
 let them be changed. [To EDGAR.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here, and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the cur-
 tains: So, so, so: We'll go to supper i'the morning: So,
 so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Come hither, friend: Where is the king my
 master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are
 gone.

Glo. Good friend, I pr'ythee, take him in thy arms;
 I have o'er-heard a plot of death upon him:
 There is a litter ready; lay him in't,
 And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet

¹ — *brach, or lym,*] Names for particular sorts of dogs.—*Brach* seems to have been a female lurcher or beagle, or any fine-nosed hound; a *lym* was a blood hound.—NARES and MALONE.

^m — *tike,*] i. e. A little worthless dog, from *Tijk*, Runick.

ⁿ — *trundle-tail,*] i. e. *Curly-tail*: a trundle was any thing round.—NARES.

^o — *Sessa,*] i. e. *Be quiet*.

^p — *thy horn is dry.*] This was a proverbial expression, signifying that a person had said all he had to say. The allusion is to the *horn* which is still used in many places in the country as a cup for drinking.—STEVENS.

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:
 If thou should'st dally half an hour, his life,
 With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
 Stand in assured loss: Take up, take up;
 And follow me, that will to some provision
 Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppress'd nature sleeps:—
 This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,
 Which, if convenience will not allow,
 Stand in hard cure. Come, help to bear thy master;
 Thou must not stay behind. [*To the Fool.*]

Glo. Come, come, away.
 [*Exeunt KENT, GLOSTER, and the Fool,*
bearing off the King.]

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
 We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
 Who alone suffers, suffers most i'the mind;
 Leaving free things,^a and happy shows, behind:
 But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
 When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
 How light and portable my pain seems now,
 When that, which makes me bend, makes the king bow;
 He childed, as I father'd!—Tom, away:
 Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,^r
 When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
 In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee.
 What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!
 Lurk, lurk. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VII.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, and
Servants.

Corn. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show

^a — *free things,*] States clear from distress.—JOHNSON.

^r *Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,*] Attend to the great events that are approaching, and make thyself known when that *false opinion* now prevailing against thee shall, in consequence of *just proof* of thy integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence. To *bewray* is to *discover*.—JOHNSON and STEEVENS.

him this letter :— the army of France is landed :— Seek out the villain Gloster. [*Exeunt some of the Servants.*]

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure. — Edmund, keep you our sister company ; the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father, are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate^s preparation ; we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift, and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister ;—farewell, my lord of Gloster.^t

Enter Steward.

How now ? Where's the king ?

Stew. My lord of Gloster hath convey'd him hence : Some five or six and thirty of his knights, Hot questrists^u after him, met him at gate ; Who, with some other of the lord's dependants, Are gone with him towards Dover ; where they boast To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

[*Exeunt GONERIL and EDMUND.*]

Corn. Edmund, farewell.—Go, seek the traitor Gloster, Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us :

[*Exeunt other Servants.*]

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice ; yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control. Who's there ? The traitor ?

Re-enter Servants, with GLOSTER.

Reg. Ingrateful fox ! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky^x arms.

^s — *festinate*—] i. e. *Hasty*.

^t — *my lord of Gloster.*] Meaning Edmund, newly invested with his father's titles. The steward, speaking immediately after, mentions the old earl by the same title.—*JOHNSON.*

^u — *questrists*—] i. e. Persons who go in search or *quest* of another.—

STEEVENS.

^x — *corky*—] i. e. *Dry* and withered.

Glo. What mean your graces?—Good my friends, consider

You are my guests : do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [*Servants bind him.*]

Reg. Hard, hard:—O filthy traitor!

Glo. Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

Corn. To this chair bind him:—Villain, thou shalt find— [*REGAN plucks his Beard.*]

Glo. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glo. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken,^y and accuse thee : I am your host ;
With robbers' hands, my hospitable favours^z
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do ?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France ?

Reg. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom ?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatick king ?
Speak.

Glo. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one oppos'd.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the king ?

Glo. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore
To Dover ? Wast thou not charg'd at thy peril—

Corn. Wherefore to Dover ? Let him first answer that.

Glo. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.^a

Reg. Wherefore to Dover ?

^y Will quicken,] i. e. Quicken into life.—M. MASON.

^z — favours—] i. e. Features. The different parts of which a face is composed.—STEEVENS.

^a — the course.] The running of the dogs upon me.—JOHNSON.

Glo. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
 Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
 In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
 The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
 In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up,
 And quench'd the stelled^b fires: yet, poor old heart,
 He holp the heavens to rain.
 If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
 Thou should'st have said, *Good porter, turn the key;*
 All cruels else subscrib'd:^c—But I shall see
 The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See it shalt thou never:—Fellows, hold the
 chair:—
 Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

[*GLOSTER is held down in his Chair, while
 CORNWALL plucks out one of his Eyes,
 and sets his Foot on it.*]

Glo. He that will think to live till he be old,
 Give me some help:—O cruel! O ye gods!

Reg. One side will mock another; the other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance,—

Serv. Hold your hand, my lord:

I have serv'd you ever since I was a child;
 But better service have I never done you,
 Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog?

Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
 I'd shake it on this quarrel: What do you mean?

Corn. My villain!^d [*Draws and runs at him.*]

Serv. Nay, then come on, and take the chance of anger.

[*Draws. They fight. CORNWALL is wounded.*]

Reg. Give me thy sword.—[*To another Servant.*] A
 peasant stand up thus!

[*Snatches a Sword, comes behind, and stabs him.*]

Serv. O, I am slain!—My lord, you have one eye left
 To see some mischief on him:—O! [*Dies.*]

^b — stelled,] i. e. Fixed, from *stell*, a fixed place of abode.—NARES.

^c — subscrib'd.] Yielded, submitted to the necessity of the occasion.—JOHNSON.

^d My villain!'] The word is here used in its original sense of one in servitude.—STEEVENS.

Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it:—Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

[*Tears out GLOSTER's other Eye, and throws it on the Ground.*]

Glo. All dark and comfortless.—Where's my son Edmund?

Edmund enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons^e to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Glo. O my follies!
Then Edgar was abus'd.—
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Reg. Go, thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.—How is't, my lord? How look you?

Corn. I have receiv'd a hurt:—Follow me, lady.—
Turn out that eyeless villain;—throw this slave
Upon the dunghill.—Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely come this hurt: give me your arm.

[*Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN;—Servants unbind GLOSTER, and lead him out.*]

1 *Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.

2 *Serv.* If she live long,
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,^f
Women will all turn monsters.

1 *Serv.* Let's follow the old earl, and get the bedlam
To lead him where he would; his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

2 *Serv.* Go thou; I'll fetch some flax, and whites of
eggs,
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!
[*Exeunt severally.*]

^e — the overture of thy treasons—] Overture is here used for an opening or discovery. It was he who first laid thy treasons open to us.—MALONE.

^f — the old course of death,] that is, die a natural death.—MALONE.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Heath.**Enter* EDGAR.

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,^s
 Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
 The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
 Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
 The lamentable change is from the best;
 The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
 Thou unsubstantial air, that I embrace!
 The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,
 Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here?—

Enter GLOSTER, *led by an old Man.*

My father, poorly led?—World, world, O world!
 But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,^b
 Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O my good lord, I have been your tenant,
 and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glo. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
 Thy comforts can do me no good at all,
 Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glo. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
 I stumbled when I saw: Full oft 'tis seen,
 Our meanⁱ secures us: and our mere defects

^s *Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,*] For and known Dr. Johnson proposes to read *unknown*, which is approved by Tyrwhitt and Malone;—but the meaning of Edgar's speech seems to be this. "Yet it is better to be thus, in this fixed and acknowledged contemptible state, than, living in affluence, to be flattered and despised at the same time. He who is placed in the worst and lowest state, has this advantage—he lives in hope, and not in fear, of a reverse of fortune. The lamentable change is from affluence to beggary. He laughs at the idea of changing for the worse, who is already as low as possible."
 —SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

^b — *World, world, O world!*

But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,] O world! if reverses of fortune and changes such as I now see and feel, from ease and affluence to poverty and misery, did not show us the little value of life, we should never submit with any kind of resignation to the weight of years, and its necessary consequence, infirmity and death.—MALONE.

ⁱ *Our mean,*] i. e. Our mediocrity of condition.

Prove our commodities.—Ah, dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say, I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now? Who's there?

Edg. [aside.] O gods! Who is't can say *I am at the worst?*
I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [aside.] And worse I may be yet: The worst is not,
So long as we can say, *This is the worst.*

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Glo. Is it a beggarman?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glo. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I'the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a man a worm: My son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard more since:
As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods:
They kill us for their sport.

Edg. How should this be?—

Bad is the trade must play the fool to sorrow,
Ang'ring itself and others. [*Aside.*—Bless thee, master!

Glo. Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glo. Then, pr'ythee, get thee gone: If, for my sake,
Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
I'the way to Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Whom I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he's mad.

Glo. 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parrel that I have,
Come on't what will. [*Exit.*

Glo. Sirrah, naked fellow.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.—I cannot daub^k it further.

[*Aside.*

^k — daub—] i. e. *Disguise.*

Glo. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*aside.*] And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes,
they bleed,

Glo. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way, and foot-path.
Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits : Bless
the good man from the foul fiend ! Five fiends have been
in poor Tom at once ; of lust, as *Obidicut* ; *Hobbididance*,
prince of dumbness ; *Mahu*, of stealing ; *Modo*, of mur-
der ; and *Flibbertigibbet*, of mopping and mowing ;¹ who
since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women. So,
bless thee, master !

Glo. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heaven's
plagues
Have humbled to all strokes : that I am wretched,
Makes thee the happier :—Heavens, deal so still !
Let the superfluous,^m and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance,ⁿ that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly ;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough.—Dost thou know Dover ?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glo. There's a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in^o the confined deep :
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear,
With something rich about me : from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm ;
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt.

¹ — *mopping and mowing* ;] To mop and to mowe both mean to make grimaces. The names of the spirits here are from Harsnet's *Declaration*, and have been mentioned before in Act III.

^m — *superfluous*,] Here used for our living in abundance.—WARBURTON.

ⁿ *That slaves your ordinance, &c.*] i. e. Treats it as a slave, makes it subject to him, instead of acting in obedience to it.—STEEVENS.

^o — *in*]—for *into*, as we still say to look *in* a glass.—MALONE.

SCENE II.

Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter GONERIL and EDMUND; Steward meeting them.

Gon. Welcome, my lord : I marvel, our mild husband
Not met us on the way :—Now, where's your master ?

Stew. Madam, within ; but never man so chang'd :
I told him of the army that was landed ;
He smil'd at it : I told him, you were coming ;
His answer was, *The worse* : of Gloster's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot ;
And told me, I had turn'd the wrong side out :—
What most he should dislike, seems pleasant to him ;
What like, offensive.

Gon.

Then shall you go no further.

[*To EDMUND.*

It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake : he'll not feel wrongs,
Which tie him to an answer : Our wishes, on the way,
May prove effects.^p Back, Edmund, to my brother ;
Hasten his musters, and conduct his powers :
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us : ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this ; spare speech ;
[*Giving a Favour.*

Decline your head :^q this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air ;—
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon.

My most dear Gloster !

[*Exit EDMUND.*

^p — Our wishes, on the way,

May prove effects.] What we wish, before our march is at an end, may be brought to happen, i. e. the murder or despatch of her husband.—STEEVENS.

^q Decline your head : &c.] She bids him decline his head, that she might give him a kiss (the steward being present), and that it might appear only to him as a whisper.—STEEVENS.

O, the difference of man, and man ! To thee
A woman's services are due ; my fool
Usurps my bed.

Stew.

Madam, here comes my lord.

[*Exit Steward.*]

Enter ALBANY.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.^r

Alb.

O Goneril !

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face.—I fear your disposition :
That nature, which contemns its origin,
Cannot be border'd certain in itself ;^s
She that herself will sliver^t and disbranch
From her material sap,^u perforce must wither,
And come to deadly use.^x

Gon. No more ; the text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile :
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done ?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd ?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate ! have you madded.
Could my brother suffer you to do it ?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited ?
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
'Twill come,

^r *I have been worth the whistle.*] Goneril's meaning seems to be—*There was a time when you would have thought me worth the calling to you ; reproaching him for not having summoned her to consult with on the present critical occasion.*—STEEVENS.

^s *Cannot be border'd certain in itself ;*] i. e. Cannot from thenceforth be restrained within any certain bounds, but is prepared to break out into the most monstrous excesses every way, as occasion or temptation may offer.—HEATH.

^t *— sliver—*] i. e. *Tear off.*

^u *She that herself will sliver and disbranch*

From her material sap,] She who breaks the bonds of filial duty, and becomes wholly alienated from her father, must wither and perish, like a branch separated from that sap which supplies it with nourishment, and gives life to the matter of which it is composed.—MALONE.

^x *And come to deadly use.*] Alluding to the use that witches and enchanters are said to make of withered branches in their charms. A fine insinuation of the speaker, that she was ready for the most unnatural mischief.—WARBURTON.

Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.^y

Gon. Milk-liver'd man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs ;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering ; that not know'st,
Fools do those villains pity, who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum ?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land ;
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats ;
Whilst thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and cry'st,
Alack! why does he so?

Alb. See thyself, devil!

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid, as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool!

Alb. Thou chang'd and self-cover'd thing,^z for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature.^a Were it my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones :—Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood now !—

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news ?

Mess. O, my good lord, the duke of Cornwall's dead :
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloster.

Alb. Gloster's eyes !

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword
To his great master ; who, thereat enrag'd,

^y — *monsters of the deep.*] Fishes are the only animals that prey upon their own species.—JOHNSON.

^z — *self-cover'd thing,*] i. e. That hast *disguised* nature by wickedness.—JOHNSON.

^a — *feature,*] In Shakspeare's time, meant the general cast of countenance, and often beauty.—MALONE.

Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead :^b
 But not without that harmful stroke, which since
 Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
 You justicers, that these our nether crimes
 So speedily can venge !—But, O, poor Gloster !
 Lost he is other eye !

Mess. Both, both, my lord.—
 This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer ;
 'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [*Aside.*] One way I like this well ;^c
 But being widow, and my Gloster with her,
 May all the building in my fancy pluck
 Upon my hateful life : Another way,
 The news is not so tart.—I'll read, and answer. [*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son, when they did take his eyes ?

Mess. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mess. No, my good lord ; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness ?

Mess. Ay, my good lord ; 'twas he inform'd against him ;
 And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
 Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloster, I live
 To thank thee for the love thou showd'st the king,
 And to revenge thine eyes.—Come hither, friend ;
 Tell me what more thou knowest. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The French Camp, near Dover.

Enter KENT, and a Gentleman.

Kent. Why the king of France is so suddenly gone
 back know you the reason ?

^b — amongst them fell'd him dead :] i. e. They (Cornwall and his other servants) amongst them fell'd him dead.—MALONE.

^c One way I like this well ;] The death of Cornwall was the removal of one impediment to possessing the whole of the kingdom.—M. MASON.

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state,
Which since his coming forth is thought of; which
Imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger,
That his personal return was most requir'd,
And necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The mareschal of France, Monsieur le Fer.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd, she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be the king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it mov'd her?

Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better day:^d Those happy smiles,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd.—In brief, sorrow
Would be a rarity most belov'd, if all
Could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?^e

Gent. 'Faith, once, or twice, she heav'd the name of
father

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried, *Sisters! sisters!—Shame of ladies! sisters!*

Kent! father! sisters! What? i'the storm? i'the night?

Let pity not be believed!^f—There she shook

^d — a better day:] A better day is the best day, and the best day is a day most favourable to the productions of the earth. Such are the days in which there is a due mixture of rain and sunshine. The comparative is often used by Milton and others, as well as Shakspeare, instead of the positive and superlative.—STEEVENS.

^e Made she no verbal question?] Means only, Did she enter into no conversation with you? In this sense our poet frequently uses the word question, and not simply as the act of interrogation.—STEEVENS.

^f Let pity not be believed!] i. e. Let not such a thing as pity be supposed to exist!—STEEVENS.

The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd :^g—then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,

The stars above us, govern our conditions ;^h
Else one self mate and mateⁱ could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd ?

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir ; The poor distress'd Lear is i'the town.
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir ?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him : his own un-
kindness,

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman !

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard
not ?

Gent. 'Tis so ; they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him : some dear cause^k
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile ;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

^g — clamour moisten'd:] That is, her out-cries were accompanied with tears.—
JOHNSON.

^h — govern our conditions ;] i. e. Regulate our dispositions.—MALONE.

ⁱ — one self mate and mate.] i. e. The same husband and wife. *Self* is here
used, as in many other places, for *self-same*.—JOHNSON and MALONE.

^k — some dear cause—] Some important business.—MALONE.

SCENE IV.

The same. A Tent.

Enter CORDELIA, Physician, and Soldiers.

Cor. Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea: singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter,¹ and furrow weeds,
With harlocks,^m hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn.—A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*—What can
man's wisdom do,
In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He, that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Phy. There is means, madam:
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All bless'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate,
In the good man's distress!—Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it."

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Madam, news;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them.—O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning, and important^o tears, hath pitied.

¹ — fumiter,] i. e. Fumitory.

^m — harlocks,] For charlocks, the wild mustard.—TODD.

ⁿ — the means to lead it.] The reason which should guide it.—JOHNSON..

^o — important—] For importunate.

No blown ambition^p doth our arms incite,
 But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right :
 Soon may I hear, and see him ! [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter REGAN and Steward.

Reg. But are my brother's powers set forth ?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Reg. Himself

In person there ?

Stew. Madam, with much ado :

Your sister is the better soldier.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home ?

Stew. No, madam.

Reg. What might import my sister's letter to him ?

Stew. I know not, lady.

Reg. 'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter,

It was great ignorance, Gloster's eyes being out,

To let him live ; where he arrives, he moves

All hearts against us ; Edmund, I think, is gone,

In pity of his misery, to despatch

His nighted life ; moreover, to descry

The strength o'the enemy.

Stew. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow ; stay with us ;
 The ways are dangerous.

Stew. I may not, madam ;

My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund ? Might not
 you

Transport her purposes by word ? Belike,

Something—I know not what :—I'll love thee much,

Let me unseal the letter.

Stew. Madam, I had rather—

Reg. I know, your lady does not love her husband ;

^p No blown ambition—] No inflated, no swelling pride.—JOHNSON.

I am sure of that : and, at her late being here,
She gave strange œiliads,¹ and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund : I know, you are of her bosom.

Stew. I, madam ?

Reg. I speak in understanding; you are, I know it :
Therefore, I do advise you, take this note :²

My lord is dead ; Edmund and I have talk'd ;
And more convenient is he for my hand,
Than for your lady's :—You may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this ;
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Stew. 'Would I could meet him, madam ! I would show
What party I do follow.

Reg.

Fare thee well.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.^s

The Country near Dover.

Enter GLOSTER, and EDGAR, dressed like a Peasant.

Glo. When shall we come to the top of that same hill ?

Edg. You do climb up it now : look, how we labour.

Glo. Methinks, the ground is even.

Edg.

Horrible steep :

Hark, do you hear the sea ?

Glo.

No, truly.

Edg. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Glo.

So may it be, indeed :

Methinks, thy voice is alter'd ; and thou speak'st
In better phrase, and matter than thou didst.

¹ — œiliads,] i. e. *A cast, or significant glance of the eye, from œillade, Fr.*
—STEEVENS.

² — *I do advise you, take this note:] Note means in this place not a letter, but a remark. Therefore observe what I am saying.—JOHNSON.*

^s *Scene VI.] This scene, and the stratagem by which Gloster is cured of his desperation, is wholly borrowed from Sidney's Arcadia, book 2.—JOHNSON.*

Edg. You are much deceiv'd ; in nothing am I chang'd,
But in my garments.

Glo. Methinks, you are better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir ; here's the place ;—stand still.—
How fearful

And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low !
The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles : Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire ; dreadful trade !
Methinks, he seems no bigger than his head :
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice ; and yon' tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock ;[†] her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight : The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high :—I'll look no more ;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple^u down headlong.

Glo. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand : You are now within a foot
Of the extreme verge : for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.^a

Glo. Let go my hand.

Here, friend, is another purse ; in it, a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking : Fairies, and gods,
Prosper it with thee ! Go thou further off ;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir. [*Seems to go.*

Glo. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair,
Is done to cure it.

Glo. O, you mighty gods !

This world I do renounce ; and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off :
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,

[†] — her cock ;] Her cock-boat.

^u Topple—] i. e. Fall.

^a Would I not leap upright.] i. e. From the ground upright : is barely expletive.
—FARMER.

My snuff, and loathed part of nature, should
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!—
Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He leaps, and falls along.*

Edg. Gone, sir? farewell.—

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft:^y Had he been where he thought,
By this, had thought been past.—Alive, or dead?
Ho, you sir! friend!—Hear you, sir?—speak!
Thus might he pass indeed:^z—Yet he revives:
What are you, sir?

Glo. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Had'st thou been aught but gossomer,^a feathers,
So many fathom down precipitating, [*air,*
Thou had'st shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.
Ten masts at each^b make not the altitude,
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell;
Thy life's a miracle: Speak yet again.

Glo. But have I fallen, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn:^c
Look up a-height;—the shrill-gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Glo. Alack, I have no eyes.—
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm:
Up;—So;—How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

Glo. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o'the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

^y — *when life itself*

Yields to the theft:] When life is willing to be destroyed.—JOHNSON.

^z *Thus might he pass indeed:]* Thus might he *die* in reality. We still use the word *passing bell*.—JOHNSON.

^a — *gossomer,]* *Gossomore*, the white and cobweb-like exhalations that fly about in hot sunny weather.—GREY.

^b — *at each—]* i. e. Each *at*, or *near* the other.—MALONE.

^c — *bound:]* i. e. *Boundary*.

Glo.

A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below, methought, his eyes
Were two full moons ; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd,^d and wav'd like the enridged sea ;
It was some fiend : Therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods,^e who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities,^f have preserv'd thee.

Glo. I do remember now : henceforth I'll bear
Affliction, till it do cry out itself,
Enough, enough, and, die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man ; often 'twould say,
The fiend, the fiend : he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts.^g—But who comes
here ?

Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed up with Flowers.
The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining ; I am the
king himself.

Edg. O, thou side-piercing sight !

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.—There's your
press-money.^h That fellow handles his bow like a crow
keeper :ⁱ draw me a clothier's yard.^k—Look, look, a mouse !
Peace, peace ;—this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—
There's my gauntlet ; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up
the brown bills.^l—O, well-flown, bird !—i'the clout,^m i'the
clout : hewgh !—Give the word.

^d — *whelk'd,*] i. e. *Twisted, convolved ;* from a *welk* or *whilk*, a small shell-fish.—MALONE.

^e — *the clearest gods,*] The purest ; the most free from evil.—JOHNSON.

^f *Of men's impossibilities,*] i. e. Of things which appear impossibilities to mere mortal beings.—STEEVENS.

^g — *free thoughts.*—] i. e. Not having the mind chained down to one painful idea.—JOHNSON.

^h — *press-money.*] i. e. Money which was paid to soldiers when they were retained in the king's service. It was felony to withdraw yourself from the king's service after the receipt of this money, without special leave.—DOUCE.

ⁱ — *crow-keeper :*] i. e. A person employed to drive the crows from the field.—NARES.

^k — *a clothier's yard.*—] i. e. "An arrow of a cloth-yard long," such as we read of in Chevy Chase.

^l — *the brown bills.*—] A *bill* was a kind of battle-axe, affixed to a long staff.—STEEVENS.

^m — *O, well-flown, bird !—i'the clout, &c.*] *Lear* is here raving of *archery*, and shooting at *buts*, as is plain by the words *i'the clout*, that is, the *white mark* they set up and aim at ; hence the phrase, to *hit the white*.—WARBURTON.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glo. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!—They flatter'd me like a dog; and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say *ay*, and *no*, to every thing I said!—Ay and no too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found them, there I smelt them out. Go to, they are not men o'their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie; I am not ague-proof.

Glo. The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see, how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life: What was thy cause?—

Adultery.—

Thou shalt not die: Die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive, for Gloster's bastard son
Was kinder to his father, than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
To't, luxury,ⁿ pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.—
Behold yon' simpering dame,
Whose face between her forks presageth snow;
That minces virtue, and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name;
The fitchew,^o nor the soiled horse,^p goes to't
With a more riotous appetite.
Down from the waist they are centaurs,
Though women all above:
But^q to the girdle do the gods inherit,

ⁿ ——— luxury,] i. e. Incontinency.

^o ——— fitchew,] i. e. The polecat.

^p ——— soiled horse,] i. e. A horse fed with hay and corn in the stable during the winter, and turned out in the spring to take the first flush of grass, or has it cut and carried to him. This at once cleanses the animal, and fills him with blood.—STEVENS.

^q But—] For only.

Beneath is all the fiends'; there's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, consumption;—Fye, fye, fye! pah; pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's money for thee.

Glo. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Glo. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world Shall so wear out to nought.—Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny^r at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll not love.—Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning of it.

Glo. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report;—it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glo. What, with the case of eyes?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light: Yet you see how this world goes.

Glo. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes, with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yon' justice rails upon yon' simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: Change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?—Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glo. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur?

There thou might'st behold the great image of authority; a dog's obeyed in office.—

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand:

Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;

^r — squiny—] i. e. Look asquint.

Robes, and furr'd gowns, hide all. Plate sin with gold,
 And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks :
 Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.
 None does offend, none, I say, none ; I'll able 'em :^s
 Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
 To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes ;
 And, like a scurvy politician, seem
 To see the things thou dost not.—Now, now, now, now :
 Pull off my boots :—Harder, harder ; so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd !
Reason in madness !

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
 I know thee well enough ; thy name is Gloster :
 Thou must be patient ; we came crying hither.
 Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
 We wawl, and cry :—I will preach to thee ; mark me.

Glo. Alack, alack the day !

Lear. When we are born, we cry, that we are come
 To this great stage of fools ;—This a good block ?[—]
 It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
 A troop of horse with felt : I'll put it in proof ;
 And when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law,
 Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill."

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is ; lay hand upon him.—Sir,
 Your most dear daughter——

Lear. No rescue ? What, a prisoner ? I am even
 The natural fool of fortune.—Use me well ;
 You shall have ransome. Let me have a surgeon,
 I am cut to the brains.

Gent. You shall have any thing.

^s — I'll able 'em:] An old phrase signifying to qualify, or uphold them.

^t — This a good block ?—] Before the king's saying, *I will preach to thee*, the poet seems to have meant him to pull off his hat, and keep turning it and feeling it, in the attitude of one of the preachers of those times (whom I have seen represented so in ancient prints), till the idea of *felt*, which the good hat or *block* was made of, raises the stratagem in his brain of shoeing a troop of horse with a substance the same as that which he held and moulded between his hands.—STEEVENS.

^u — kill, kill, &c.] Formerly the word given in the English army when an onset was made on the enemy.—MALONE.

Lear. No seconds? All myself?
 Why, this would make a man, a man of salt,^x
 To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
 Ay, and for laying autumn's dust.

Gent. Good sir,—

Lear. I will die bravely, like a bridegroom; What?
 I will be jovial; come, come; I am a king,
 My masters, know you that?

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in it.^y Nay, an you get it, you
 shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[*Exit running; Attendants follow.*]

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch;
 Past speaking of in a king!—Thou hast one daughter,
 Who redeems nature from the general curse
 Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Hail, gentle sir.

Gent. Sir, speed you: What's your will?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

Gent. Most sure, and vulgar: every one hears that,
 Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favour,
 How near's the other army?

Gent. Near, and on speedy foot; the main descry
 Stands on the hourly thought.^z

Edg. I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
 Her army is mov'd on.

Edg. I thank you, sir. [*Exit Gent.*]

Glo. You ever gentle gods, take my breath from me;
 Let not my worser spirit^a tempt me again
 To die before you please!

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glo. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame by fortune's blows;

^x — a man of salt,] i. e. A man of tears.—MALONE.

^y Then there's life in it.] The case is not yet desperate.—JOHNSON.

^z — the main descry

Stands on the hourly thought.] The main body is expected to be descry'd every hour. The expression is harsh.—JOHNSON.

^a — my worser spirit—] i. e. My evil genius.

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,^b
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Glo. Hearty thanks :
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter Steward.

Stew. A proclaim'd prize ! Most happy !
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes.—Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember :^c—The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to it. [*EDGAR opposes.*]

Stew. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor ? Hence ;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Stew. Let go, slave, or thou diest.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait,^d and let poor volk
pass. And ch'ud ha' been zwagger'd out of my life,
'twould not ha' been zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay,
come not near the old man ; keep out, che vor'ye,^e or ise
try whether your costard^f or my bat^g be the harder :
Ch'll be plain with you.

Stew. Out, dunghill !

Edg. Ch'll pick your teeth, zir : Come ; no matter
vor your foins.^h

[*They fight ; and EDGAR knocks him down.*]

Stew. Slave, thou hast slain me :—Villain, take my
purse ;

^b ——— known and feeling sorrows,] i. e. Sorrows past and present.—WARBURTON.

^c Briefly thyself remember :—] i. e. Quickly recollect the past offences of thy life, and recommend thyself to heaven.—WARBURTON.

^d ——— go your gait,] Gang your gait is a common expression in the north.—STEEVENS.

^e ——— che vor'ye,] I warn you. Edgar counterfeits the western dialect.—JOHNSON.

^f ——— costard—] i. e. Head.

^g ——— my bat—] i. e. Club, or staff.

^h ——— your foins.] To foins is to make what we call a thrust in fencing. Shakspeare often uses the word.—STEEVENS.

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body ;
 And give the letters, which thou find'st about me,
 To Edmund earl of Gloster ; seek him out
 Upon the British party :—O, untimely death ! [Dies.]

Edg. I know thee well : A serviceable villain ;
 As duteous to the vices of thy mistress,
 As badness would desire.

Glo.

What, is he dead ?

Edg. Sit you down, father ; rest you.—
 Let's see his pockets : these letters that he speaks of,
 May be my friends.—He's dead ; I am only sorry
 He had no other death's-man.—Let us see :—
 Leave, gentle wax : and, manners, blame us not :
 To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts :
 Their papers, is more lawful.

[Reads.] *Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off : if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror : Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol ; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.*

*Your wife, (so I would say,) and your
 affectionate servant,*

GONERIL.

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will !ⁱ—
 A plot upon her virtuous husband's life ;
 And the exchange, my brother !—Here, in the sands,
 Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified^k
 Of murderous lechers : and, in the mature time,
 With this ungracious paper strike the sight
 Of the death-practis'd^l duke : For him 'tis well,
 That of thy death and business I can tell.

[Exit EDGAR, dragging out the Body.]

ⁱ O undistinguished space of woman's will !] i. e. O undistinguishing licentiousness of a woman's inclinations !—STEEVENS.

^k Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified, &c.] I'll cover thee. In Staffordshire, to rake the fire, is to cover it with fuel for the night. The epithet, *unsanctified*, refers to his want of burial in consecrated ground.—JOHNSON and STEEVENS.

^l— death-practis'd—] i. e. Whose death is machinated by practice or treason.—JOHNSON.

Glo. The king is mad: How stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling^m
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs;
And woes, by wrong imaginations, lose
The knowledge of themselves.

Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Give me your hand:
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

*A Tent in the French Camp. LEAR on a Bed, asleep;
Physician, Gentleman, and others, attending: Enter
CORDELIA and KENT.*

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'er-paid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more, nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited:ⁿ
These weeds are memories^o of those worser hours;
I pr'ythee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam;
Yet to be known, shortens my made intent:^p
My boon I make it, that you know me not,
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be it so, my good lord.—How does the king?
[*To the Physician.*]

Phys. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!

^m — *ingenious feeling*—] i. e. Feeling from an understanding not disturbed, but which, representing things as they are, makes the sense of pain the more exquisite.—*WAREBURTON.*

ⁿ — *suit*ed:] i. e. *Dressed.*

^o — *memories*—] i. e. *Remembrancers.*

^p — *my made intent*:] i. e. *My intent formed.*

The untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-chang'd father!

Phys. So please your majesty,
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Gent. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep,
We put fresh garments on him.

Phys. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phys. Please you, draw near.—Louder the musick there.

Cor. O, my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be expos'd against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch (poor perdu!)
With this thin helm?^a Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; And wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.^r—He wakes; speak to him.

Phys. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o'the grave:—
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound

^a — to watch (poor perdu!)

With this thin helm?] The allusion is to the forlorn hope in an army, which are put upon desperate adventures, and called in French *enfants perdus*. With this thin helm? i. e. this thin covering of hair.—WARBURTON and MALONE.

^r Had not concluded all.] i. e. It is wonder that thy wits and life at once had not all ended.—JOHNSON.

Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; When did you die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Phys. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair daylight?—

I am mightily abus'd.—I should even die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.—
I will not swear, these are my hands:—let's see;
I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:—
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward; and, to deal plainly,
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks, I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, 'faith. I pray, weep
not:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know, you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Phys. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is cur'd in him: and yet it is danger

To make him even o'er the time he has lost.^s

Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,
Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me:

Pray now, forget and forgive: I am old, and foolish.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, CORDELIA, Physician, and
Attendants.]

Gent. Holds it true, sir,

That the duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said,

The bastard son of Gloster.

Gent. They say, Edgar,

His banish'd son, is with the earl of Kent

In Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable.

'Tis time to look about; the powers o'the kingdom
Approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be a bloody.

Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*]

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly wrought,
Or well, or ill, as this day's battle's fought. [*Exit.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Camp of the British Forces, near Dover.*

*Enter with Drums and Colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Officers,
Soldiers, and others.*

Edm. Know of the duke, if his last purpose hold;

Or whether since he is advis'd by aught

To change the course; He's full of alteration,

And self-reproving:—bring his constant pleasure.^t

[*To an Officer, who goes out.*]

^s *To make him even o'er the time he has lost.*] i. e. To render all that past during the 'interval of his insanity even' (i. e. plain or level) to his understanding, while it continues in its present state of uncertainty.—STEEVENS.

^t — his constant pleasure.] His settled resolution.—JOHNSON.

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:
Tell me,—but truly,—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

Edm. In honour'd love.

Reg. But have you never found my brother's way
To the forefended^u place?

Edm. That thought abuses you.^x

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her: Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not:—
She, and the duke her husband,—

Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers.

Gon. I had rather lose the battle, than that sister
Should loosen him and me. [*Aside.*

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be met.—
Sir, this I hear,—The king is come to his daughter,
With others, whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king;^y with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.^z

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.^a

Reg. Why is this reason'd?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy:
For these domestick and particular broils
Are not to question here.

Alb. Let us then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

^u — forefended—] i. e. Prohibited, forbidden.

^x That thought abuses you.] That thought imposes on you.—MALONE.

^y Not bolds the king;] i. e. Not as it emboldens the king to assert his former title.—STEEVENS.

^z — make oppose.] Compel to oppose us.

^a Sir, you speak nobly.] This reply must be understood ironically.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

Gon. O, ho, I know the riddle: [*aside.*] I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR, disguised.

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you.—Speak.

[*Exeunt EDMUND, REGAN, GONERIL, Officers,
Soldiers, and Attendants.*]

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion, that will prove
What is avouched there: If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases.^b Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again. [*Exit.*]

Alb. Why, fare thee well; I will o'erlook thy paper.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view, draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery;—but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

Alb. We will greet the time.^c [*Exit.*]

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive: To take the widow,
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;

^b *And machination ceases.*] i. e. All designs against your life will have an end.
STEEVENS.

^c — *greet the time.*] i. e. Ready to meet the occasion.—JOHNSON.

And hardly shall I carry out my side,^d
 Her husband being alive. Now, then, we'll use
 His countenance for the battle; which being done,
 Let her, who would be rid of him, devise
 His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
 Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia,—
 The battle done, and they within our power,
 Shall never see his pardon: for my state
 Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A Field between the two Camps.

*Alarum within. Enter, with Drum and Colours, LEAR,
 CORDELIA, and their Forces; and exeunt.*

Enter EDGAR and GLOSTER.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
 For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
 If ever I return to you again,
 I'll bring you comfort.

Glo. Grace go with you, sir!
[Exit EDGAR.

Alarums; afterwards a Retreat. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Away, old man, give me thy hand, away;
 King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:
 Give me thy hand, come on.

Glo. No further, sir; a man may rot even here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
 Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
 Ripeness is all:^e Come on.

Glo. And that's true too.
[Exeunt.

^d — *hardly shall I carry out my side,*] i. e. "I shall scarcely be able to make out my game." The allusion is to a party at cards, and he is afraid he shall not be able to make his side successful.—M. MASON.

^e *Ripeness is all:*] i. e. To be ready, prepared, is all.—STEEVENS.

SCENE III.

The British Camp near Dover.

*Enter, in Conquest, with Drum and Colours, EDMUND;
LEAR and CORDELIA, as Prisoners; Officers, Soldiers, &c.*

Edm. Some officers take them away: good guard;
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.^f

Cor. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i'the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,—
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;—
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies:^g And we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
He that parts us, shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence, like foxes.^h Wipe thine eyes;
The goujeersⁱ shall devour them, flesh and fell,^k
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see them starve first.
Come. [*Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*]

^f ——— to censure them.] i. e. To pass sentence or judgment on them.—STEEVENS.

^g As if we were God's spies:] Angels commissioned to survey and report the lives of men, and were consequently endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action, and the mysteries of conduct.—JOHNSON.

^h And fire us hence like foxes.] It is usual to smoke foxes out of their holes.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ The goujeers—] i. e. Morbus Gallicus.

^k ——— flesh and fell,] Flesh and skin.

Edm. Come hither, captain ; hark.

Take thou this note ;¹ [*giving a paper.*] go, follow them to
One step I have advanc'd thee ; if thou dost [prison :
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes : Know thou this,—that men
Are as the time is : to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword :—Thy great employment
Will not bear question ;^m either say, thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

Off. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it ; and write happy, when thou hast done.
Mark,—I say, instantly ; and carry it so,
As I have set it down.

Off. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats ;
If it be man's work, I will do it. [*Exit Officer.*]

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, *Officers,*
and *Attendants.*

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well : You have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife :
We do require them of you ; so to use them,
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention, and appointed guard ;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyesⁿ
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen,
My reason all the same ; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time,
We sweat, and bleed : the friend hath lost his friend ;

¹ — this note—] The warrant signed by the bastard and Goneril, for the execution of Lear and Cordelia.—MALONE.

^m Will not bear question ;] i. e. The important business intrusted to him, will not admit of any delay for question, i. e. debate, or consideration.

ⁿ And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes—] i. e. Turn the launcemen, whom we have hired by giving them press-money, against us.—STEEVENS.

And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
By those that feel their sharpness:—
The question of Cordelia, and her father,
Requires a fitter place.^o

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks, our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
Bore the commission of my place and person;
The which immediacy^p may well stand up,
And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot:
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your advancement.

Reg. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most, if he should husband you.

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Gon. Holla, holla!
That eye, that told you so, look'd but a-squint.

Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I would answer
From a full-flowing stomach.—General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:^q
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.^r

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

[To EDMUND.]

^o *Requires a fitter place.*] i. e. The determination of the question what shall be done with Cordelia and her father, should be reserved for greater privacy.
—SIEEVENS.

^p — *immediacy*—] i. e. Close and immediate connexion with me, and direct authority from me.—MALONE.

^q — *the walls are thine*:] i. e. *I surrender myself up*, a metaphorical phrase, taken from the camp.—WARBURTON.

^r *The let-alone lies not in your good will.*] Whether he shall not or shall, depends not on your choice.—JOHNSON.

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason:—Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thy arrest,
This gilded serpent: [*pointing to GON.*—for your claim,
fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife;
’Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your love to me,
My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude!

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloster :—Let the trumpet sound :
If none appear to prove upon thy person,
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge ; [*throwing down a Glove.*] I'll prove
 it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick !

Gon. If not, I'll ne'er trust poison. [*Aside.*]

Edm. There's my exchange: [*throwing down a Glove.*]
what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies :
Call by thy trumpet : he that dares approach,
On him, on you, (who not?) I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho !

Edm. A herald, ho, a herald !

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue;^a for thy soldiers,
All levied in thy name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Reg. This sickness grows upon me.

Enter a Herald.

Alb. She is not well ; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit REGAN, led.*

Come hither, herald,—Let the trumpet sound,—
And read out this.

Off. Sound, trumpet. [A Trumpet sounds.]

* ——— *thy single virtue* ;] i. e. *Valour* ; a Roman sense of the word.—STEEVENS.

Herald reads.

If any man of quality, or degree, within the lists of the army, will maintain upon Edmund, supposed earl of Gloster, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear at the third sound of the trumpet: He is bold in his defence.

Edm. Sound.

[1 Trumpet.

Her. Again.

[2 Trumpet.

Her. Again.

[3 Trumpet.

[Trumpet answers within.

Enter EDGAR, armed, preceded by a Trumpet.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o'the trumpet.

Her.

What are you?

Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edg.

Know, my name is lost;

By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit:

Yet am I noble, as the adversary

I come to cope withal.

Alb.

Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he, that speaks for Edmund earl of
Gloster?

Edm. Himself;—What say'st thou to him?

Edg.

Draw thy sword;

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,

Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.^t

Behold, it is the privilege of my honours,

My oath, and my profession;^u I protest,—

Maugre^x thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,

Despise thy victor sword, and fire-new fortune,

Thy valour, and thy heart,—thou art a traitor:

False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;

Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;

^t — here is mine.] i. e. *His sword.*

^u Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,

My oath and my profession:] The privilege of this oath means the privilege gained by taking the oath administered in the regular initiation of a knight professed.—JOHNSON.

^x Maugre—] i. e. *Notwithstanding.*

And, from the extremest upward of thy head,
To the descent and dust beneath thy feet,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou, No,
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom, I should ask thy name ;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say^y of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely^z I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn :
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head :
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart ;
Which, (for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,)
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever.^a—Trumpets, speak.

[*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.*]

Alb. O save him, save him !

Gon. This is mere practice, Gloster :
By the law of arms, thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite ; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it :—Hold, sir :
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil :—
No tearing, lady ; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the Letter to EDMUND*]

Gon. Say, if I do : the laws are mine, not thine :
Who shall arraign me for't ?

Alb. Most monstrous !
Know'st thou this paper ?

Gon. Ask me not what I know.

[*Exit GONERIL.*]

Alb. Go after her : she's desperate ; govern her.
[*To an Officer, who goes out.*]

^y ——— say—] i. e. Taste or relish.—NARLS.

^z *What safe and nicely, &c.*] That delay which by the law of knighthood I might make, I scorn to make. *Nicely* is punctiliously ; if I stood on minute forms.—MALONE.

^a *Where they shall rest for ever.*] *To that place, where they shall rest for ever ;* i. e. thy heart.—MALONE.

Edm. What you have charg'd me with, that have I done;
And more, much more : the time will bring it out ;
'Tis past, and so am I : But what art thou,
That hath this fortune on me ? If thou art noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund ;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us :
The dark and vicious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true ;
The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.

Alb. Methought, thy very gait did prophecy
A royal nobleness :—I must embrace thee ;
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee, or thy father !

Edg. Worthy prince,
I know it well.^b

Alb. Where have you hid yourself ?
How have you known the miseries of your father ?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord.—List a brief tale ;—
And, when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst !—
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near, (O our lives' sweetness !
That with the pain of death we'd hourly die,
Rather than die at once !) taught me to shift
Into a mad-man's rags ; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd : and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost ; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair ;
Never (O fault !) reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last

^b *I knew it well*] The adverb *well* was added by Sir Thomas Hanmer for the sake of the metre.—STEEVENS.

Told him my pilgrimage : But his flaw'd heart,
 (Alack, too weak the conflict to support !)
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
 Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
 And shall, perchance, do good : but speak you on ;
 You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woeful, hold it in ;
 For I am almost ready to dissolve,
 Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period
 To such as love not sorrow ; but another,
 To amplify too-much, would make much more,
 And top extremity.^c
 Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
 Who having seen me in my worst estate,
 Shunn'd my abhorr'd society ; but then, finding
 Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms
 He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
 As he'd burst heaven ; threw him on my father :
 Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him,
 That ever ear receiv'd : which in recounting
 His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
 Began to crack : Twice then the trumpet sounded,
 And there I left him tranc'd.

Alb. But who was this ?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent ; who in disguise
 Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
 Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman hastily, with a bloody Knife.

Gent. Help ! help ! O help !

Edg. What kind of help ?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife ?

^c — This would have seem'd a period, &c.] The sense may probably be this : This would have seem'd a period to such as love not sorrow ; but—another, i. e. but I must add another, i. e. another period, another kind of conclusion to my story such as will increase the horrors of what has already been told.—MALONE.

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes ;
It came even from the heart of—

Alb. Who, man? speak.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady : and her sister
By her is poison'd ; she confesses it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both ; all three
Now marry in an instant.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead !—
This judgment^d of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [*Exit Gentleman.*]

Enter KENT.

Edg. Here comes Kent, sir.

Alb. O ! it is he.
The time will not allow the compliment,
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night ;
Is he not here ?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot !—
Speak, Edmund, where's the king ; and where's Cordelia ?—
See'st thou this object, Kent ? [*Edelia ?—*

[*The Bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in.*]

Kent. Alack, why thus ?

Edm. Yet Edmund was belov'd :
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so.—Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life :—Some good I mean to do.
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,—
Be brief in it,—to the castle ; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear, and on Cordelia :—
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run—

Edg. To who, my lord ?—Who has the office ? send
Thy token of reprieve.

^d This judgment, &c.] If Shakspeare had studied Aristotle all his life, he would not perhaps have been able to mark with more precision the distinct operations of terror and pity.—TYRWHITT.

Edm. Well thought on ; take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit* EDGAR.]

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid^e herself.

Alb. The gods defend her ! Bear him hence awhile.
[*EDMUND is borne off.*]

Enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms ; EDGAR,
Officer, and others.

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl !—O, you are men of
stones ;
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack :—O, she is gone for
ever !—

I know when one is dead, and when one lives ;
She's dead as earth :—Lend me a looking-glass ;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end ?

Edg. Or image of that horror ?^f

Alb. Fall, and cease !^g

Lear. This feather stirs ; she lives ! if it be so,

^e — *fordid*,] i. e. *Destroyed*.

^f *Kent. Is this the promis'd end ?*

Edg. Or image of that horror ?] By the *promis'd end* Kent does not mean that conclusion which the state of their affairs seemed to promise, but the end of the world. In St. Mark's gospel, when Christ foretels to his disciples the end of the world, and is describing to them the signs that were to precede, and mark the approach of our final dissolution, he says, "For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither shall be ;" and afterwards he says, "Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son ; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death." Kent, in contemplating the unexampled scene of affliction before him, recollects these passages, and asks, whether that was the end of the world that had been foretold to us : to which Edgar adds, only a representative or resemblance of that horror.—M. MASON. This note deserves the highest praise.—STEEVENS.

^g *Fall and cease !*] Albany is looking with attention on the pains employed by Lear to recover his child, and knows to what miseries he must survive, when he finds them to be ineffectual. Having these images present to his eyes and imagination, he cries out, *Rather fall, and cease to be, at once, than continue in existence only to be wretched.*—STEEVENS.

It is a chance that does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master! [*Kneeling.*

Lear. Pr'ythee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!

I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever!—

Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha!

What is't thou say'st?—Her voice was ever soft,

Gentle, and low: an excellent thing in woman:—

I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee.

Off. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting faulchion

I would have made them skip: I am old now,

And these same crosses spoil me.—Who are you?

Mine eyes are none o'the best:—I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,
One of them we behold.^b

Lear. This is a dull sight: Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same;

Your servant Kent: Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;

He'll strike, and quickly too: He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man;—

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of differenceⁱ and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else;^k all's cheerless, dark, and
deadly,—

Your eldest daughters have fore-doom'd themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

^b *If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,*

One of them we behold.] i. e. If Fortune, to display the plenitude of her power, should brag of two persons, one of whom she had highly elevated, and the other she had wofully depressed, we now behold the latter.—M. MASON.

ⁱ *— difference—]* i. e. *Reverse of fortune.*

^k *Nor no man else;]* Kent means, *I welcome!* No, nor no man else.—MALONE.

Alb. He knows not what he says ; and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here.—

You lords, and noble friends, know our intent.

What comfort to this great decay may come,¹

Shall be applied : For us, we will resign,

During the life of this old majesty,

To him our absolute power :—You, to your rights ;

[*To EDGAR and KENT.*

With boot,^m and such addition as your honours

Have more than merited.—All friends shall taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes

The cup of their deservings.—O, see, see !

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd !ⁿ No, no, no life ;

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,

And thou no breath at all ? O, thou wilt come no more,

Never, never, never, never, never !—

Pray you, undo this button :^o Thank you, sir.—

Do you see this ?—Look on her,—look,—her lips,—

Look there, look there !— [*He dies.*

Edg. He faints !—My lord, my lord,—

Kent. Break, heart ; I pr'ythee, break !

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost : O, let him pass ! he hates

That would upon the rack of this tough world [him,

Stretch him out longer.

Edg. O, he is gone, indeed.

¹ — *this great decay may come,*] This *great decay* is Lear, whom Shakspeare poetically calls so, and means the same as if he had said, *this piece of decay'd royalty, this ruin'd majesty.*—STEEVENS.

^m *With boot,*] With advantage.

ⁿ *And my poor fool is hang'd !*] This is an expression of tenderness for his dead Cordelia, on whose lips he is still intent, and dies away while he is searching there for indications of life. *Poor fool*, in the age of Shakspeare, was an expression of endearment.—STEEVENS.

^o *Pray you, undo this button :*] The Rev. Dr. J. Warton judiciously observes, that the swelling and heaving of the heart is described by *this* most expressive circumstance.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long :
He but usurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence. Our present business
Is general woe. Friends of my soul, you twain

[*To KENT and EDGAR.*

Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go ;
My master calls, and I must not say, no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey ;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most : we, that are young,
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt with a Dead March.*]

^P The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakspeare. There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed ; which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking oppositions of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct, it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakspeare, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners ; and the truth is, that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend, Mr. Warton, [afterwards Dr. Joseph Warton,] who has in *The Adventurer* very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series of dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Gloucester's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatick exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distresses by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villainy is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakspeare has suffered the

virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by *The Spectator*, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that in his opinion, *the Tragedy has lost half its beauty*. Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of *Cato*, the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism, and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life; but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or, that if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.*

In the present case the publick has decided.† Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the criticks concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in Lear's disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. Mr. Murphy, a very judicious critick, has evinced by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes, with great justness, that Lear would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of Edmund, which is derived, I think, from Sidney, is taken originally from Geoffry of Monmouth, whom Holinshed generally copied; but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of Shakspeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications: it first hinted Lear's madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen Shakspeare.—JOHNSON.

* I cannot help inserting, as a note on this passage of Johnson's, the following admirable observations of Schlegel:—"On a trouvé sa morte révoltante, et lorsqu'on joue cette pièce en Angleterre, Cordélie y est représentée à la fin heureuse et triomphante. Mais j'avoue que je ne conçois pas quelle idée on se fait de l'art dramatique et de la liaison des parties d'un ouvrage, quand on croit pouvoir à volonté ajuster deux dénouemens à la même pièce. Après que Léal a supporté tant de maux, il n'y a plus que la douleur de perdre Cordélie qui puisse le faire mourir d'une manière théâtrale, et si on le rétablit dans son premier état, l'ensemble de la pièce perd sa signification. Dans le plan de Shakspeare, tous les coupables sont punis, parceque le méchant court à sa perte, mais les secours de la vertu arrivent, trop tard, ou sont insuffisans, contre l'active habilité du vice. Les personnages n'ont qu'une foi vacillante à la justice des Dieux, et telle qu'elle devoit exister chez des payens; le poète nous montre que cette foi, pour être pleinement affermie, doit s'étendre sur un espace plus vaste que la courte vie des mortels." *Cours de Litt. Dram.* tom. 3. p. 80, 81.

† Dr. Johnson should rather have said that the managers of the theatres royal have decided, and the publick has been obliged to acquiesce in their decision. The altered play has the upper gallery on its side; the original drama was patronized by Addison.

"Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni."—STEEVENS.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

OF this play there were four quarto editions published during the life of the author; the first of which was published in 1597.

The original author of the story was Luigi da Porto, a gentleman of Vicenza, who died in 1529. His novel did not appear till some years after his death; being first printed at Venice in 1535, under the title of *La Giulietta*.

The story had been dramatized in this country, before 1562, for in that year Arthur Brooke published his poem, called *The Tragical Hystory of Romeus and Juliet*, and in his advertisement to the reader says, that he had seen "the same argument lately set forth on the stage with more commendation than I can look for." To this obsolete play and Brooke's poem, Shakspeare was most probably indebted for those rude materials which he has rendered so valuable by his exquisite skill and management in the tragedy before us.

Breval says in the Travels, that on a strict inquiry into the histories of Verona, he found that Shakspeare had varied very little from the truth, either in the names, characters, or other circumstances. Malone supposes this play to have been written in 1596.



PERSONS REPRESENTED.

ESCALUS, *prince of Verona.*

PARIS, *a young nobleman, kinsman to the prince.*

MONTAGUE, } *heads of two houses, at variance with each*
CAPULET, } *other.*

An old Man, uncle to Capulet.

ROMEO, *son to Montague.*

MERCUTIO, *kinsman to the prince, and friend to Romeo.*

BENVOLIO, *nephew to Montague, and friend to Romeo.*

TYBALT, *nephew to Lady Capulet.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE, *a Franciscan.*

FRIAR JOHN, *of the same Order.*

BALTHAZAR, *servant to Romeo.*

SAMPSON, } *servants to Capulet.*
GREGORY, }

ABRAM, *servant to Montague.*

An Apothecary,

Three Musicians.

Chorus. *Boy; Page to Paris; PETER; an Officer.*

Lady MONTAGUE, *wife to Montague.*

Lady CAPULET, *wife to Capulet.*

JULIET, *daughter to Capulet.*

Nurse to Juliet.

Citizens of Verona; several Men and Women, Relations to both Houses; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen, and Attendants.

SCENE, *during the greater part of the Play, in Verona: once in the fifth Act, at Mantua.*

PROLOGUE.

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life ;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Do, with their death, bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffick of our stage ;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.*

* This prologue, after the first copy was published in 1597, received several alterations, both in respect of correctness and versification. In the folio it is omitted.—The play was originally performed by *the Right Hon. the Lord of Hunsdon his servants*.

In the first of King James I. was made an act of parliament for some restraint or limitation of noblemen in the protection of players, or of players under their sanction.—STEEVENS.

Under the word PROLOGUE, in the copy of 1599, is printed *Chorus*, which I suppose meant only that the prologue was to be spoken by the same person who personated the Chorus at the end of the first act.

The original prologue, in the quarto of 1597, stands thus :

“ Two household frends, alike in dignitie,
“ In faire Verona, where we lay our scene,
“ From civil broyles broke into enmitie,
“ Whose civill warre makes civill handes uncleane.
“ From forth the fatall loynes of these two foes
“ A paire of starre-crost lovers tooke their life ;
“ Whose misadventures, piteous overthrowes,
“ (Through the continuing of their fathers' strife,
“ And death-markt passage of their parents' rage,)
“ Is now the two howres traffique of our stage.
“ The which if you with patient eares attend,
“ What here we want, wee'll studie to amend.”—MALONE.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A publick Place.*

Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, armed with Swords and Bucklers.

Sam. GREGORY, o'my word, we'll not carry coals.*

Gre. No, for then we should be colliers.

Sam. I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

Gre. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of the collar.

Sam. I strike quickly, being moved.

Gre. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

Sam. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

Gre. To move, is—to stir; and to be valiant, is—to stand to it: therefore, if thou art moved, thou run'st away.

Sam. A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

Gre. That shews thee a weak slave: for the weakest goes to the wall.

Sam. True; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall:—therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

Gre. The quarrel is between our masters, and us their men.

Sam. 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids; I will cut off their heads.

* — *we'll not carry coals.*] i. e. *Will not put up with insults.* The origin of the phrase is this; that in every family, the scullions, the turnspits, the carriers of wood and coals, were esteemed the very lowest menials.—NARES.

Gre. The heads of the maids ?

Sam. Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads ; take it in what sense thou wilt.

Gre. They must take it in sense, that feel it.

Sam. Me they shall feel, while I am able to stand : and, 'tis known, I am a pretty piece of flesh.

Gre. 'Tis well, thou art not fish ; if thou hadst, thou hadst been poor John.^b Draw thy tool ; here comes two of the house of the Montagues.^c

Enter ABRAM and BALTHAZAR.

Sam. My naked weapon is out ; quarrel, I will back thee.

Gre. How ? turn thy back, and run ?

Sam. Fear me not.

Gre. No, marry : I fear thee !

Sam. Let us take the law of our sides ; let them begin.

Gre. I will frown, as I pass by ; and let them take it as they list.

Sam. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb^d at them ; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir ?

Sam. I do bite my thumb, sir.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir ?

Sam. Is the law on our side, if I say—ay ?

Gre. No.

Sam. No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir ; but I bite my thumb, sir.

Gre. Do you quarrel, sir ?

Abr. Quarrel, sir ? no, sir.

Sam. If you do, sir, I am for you ; I serve as good a man as you.

^b — poor John.] i. e. *Hake, dried and salted.*

^c — here comes two of the house of the Montagues.] It should be observed, that the partizans of the Montague family wore a token in their hats to distinguish them from their enemies, the Capulets. Hence, throughout this play, they are known at a distance. This circumstance is mentioned by Gascoigne, in a *Devise for a Masque*, written for Lord Montacute, 1575.—MALONE.

^d — bite my thumb—] This was an insult. The thumb in this action represented a *fig*, and the whole was equivalent to a *fig for you*, or the *fico*. The custom is generally regarded as of Spanish origin. This mode of quarrelling appears to have been common in our author's time.—NARES and MALONE.

Abr. No better.

Sam. Well, sir.

Enter BENVOLIO, *at a distance.*

Gre. Say—better; here comes one of my master's kinsmen.*

Sam. Yes, better, sir.

Abr. You lie.

Sam. Draw, if you be men.—Gregory, remember thy swashing^f blow. *[They fight.]*

Ben. Part, fools; put up your swords; you know not what you do. *[Beats down their swords.]*

Enter TYBALT.

Tyb. What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

Ben. I do but keep the peace; put up thy sword, Or manage it to part these men with me.

Tyb. What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word, As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee: Have at thee, coward. *[They fight.]*

Enter several Partizans of both Houses, who join the fray: then enter Citizens, with Clubs.

1 *Cit.* Clubs, bills,^g and partizans! strike! beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!

Enter CAPULET, *in his Gown; and* Lady CAPULET.

Cap. What noise is this?—Give me my long sword,^h ho!

La. Cap. A crutch, a crutch!—Why call you for a sword?

Cap. My sword, I say!—Old Montague is come. And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

* — here comes one of my master's kinsmen.] *Gregory* does not here mean *Benvolio*, who was of the *Montague* faction: but *Tybalt*, who enters immediately after *Benvolio*, but on a different part of the stage.—*STEEVENS.*

^f — swashing—] i. e. *Violent, overpowering.*—*NARES.*

^g *Clubs, bills, &c.*] When an affray arose in the streets, *clubs* was the usual exclamation.—*MALONE.*

^h — long sword,] i. e. A sword used in war, which was sometimes wielded with both hands.—*JOHNSON.*

Enter MONTAGUE, and Lady MONTAGUE.

Mon. Thou villain Capulet,—Hold me not, let me go.

La. Mon. Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

Enter Prince, with Attendants.

Prin. Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
 Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,—
 Will they not hear?—what ho! you men, you beasts,—
 That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
 With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
 On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
 Throw your mis-temper'd weaponsⁱ to the ground,
 And hear the sentence of your moved prince.—
 Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
 By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
 Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets;
 And made Verona's ancient citizens
 Cast by their grave beseeching ornaments,
 To wield old partizans, in hands as old,
 Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate:
 If ever you disturb our streets again,
 Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
 For this time, all the rest depart away:
 You, Capulet, shall go along with me;
 And Montague, come you this afternoon,
 To know our further pleasure in this case,
 To old Free-town,^j our common judgment-place.
 Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

*[Exeunt Prince, and Attendants; CAPULET,
 Lady CAPULET, TYBALT, Citizens,
 and Servants.]*

Mon. Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?
 Speak, nephew, were you by, when it began?

Ben. Here were the servants of your adversary,
 And yours, close fighting ere I did approach:
 I drew to part them; in the instant came
 The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepar'd;

ⁱ ——— *mistemper'd weapons*—] i. e. *Angry weapons*.—STEEVENS.

^j ——— *Free-town*,] This name the poet found in the *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, 1562. It is there said to be the castle of the Capulets.—MALONE,

Which, as he breath'd defiance to my ears,
He swung about his head, and cut the winds,
Who, nothing hurt withal, hiss'd him in scorn :
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
Came more and more, and fought on part and part,
Till the prince came, who parted either part.

La. Mon. O, where is Romeo !—Saw you him to-day ?
Right glad I am, he was not at this fray.

Ben. Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad ;
Where,—underneath the grove of sycamore,
That westward rooteth from the city's side,—
So early walking did I see your son :
Towards him I made ; but he was 'ware of me,
And stole into the covert of the wood :
I, measuring his affections by my own,—
That most are busied when they are most alone,—
Pursu'd my humour, not pursuing his,
And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

Mon. Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs :
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Should in the further east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
Away from light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself ;
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night :
Black and portentous must this humour prove,
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

Ben. My noble uncle, do you know the cause ?

Mon. I neither know it, nor can learn of him.

Ben. Have you imp'rtun'd him by any means ?

Mon. Both by myself, and many other friends :
But he, his own affections' counsellor,
Is to himself—I will not say, how true—
But to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,

As is the bud bit with an envious worm,
 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
 Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.
 Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
 We would as willingly give cure, as know.

Enter ROMEO, at a distance.

Ben. See, where he comes : So please you, step aside;
 I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

Mon. I would, thou wert so happy by thy stay,
 To hear true shrift.—Come, madam, let's away.

[Exeunt MONTAGUE and Lady.]

Ben. Good morrow, cousin.

Rom. Is the day so young?

Ben. But new struck nine.

Rom. Ah me! sad hours seem long.
 Was that my father that went hence so fast?

Ben. It was:—What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

Rom. Not having that, which, having, makes them
 short.

Ben. In love?

Rom. Out.—

Ben. Of love?

Rom. Out of her favour, where I am in love.

Ben. Alas, that love, so gentle in his view,
 Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

Rom. Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,
 Should, without eyes, see pathways to his will!^k
 Where shall we dine?—O me!—What fray was here?
 Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love:—
 Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!

O any thing, of nothing first create!

O heavy lightness! serious vanity!

Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!

Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!—

^k — to his will!] i. e. That the *blind god* should yet be able to direct his arrows at those whom he wishes to hit, that he should wound whomever he *wills*, or desires to wound.—MALONE.

This love feel I, that feel no love in this.

Dost thou not laugh ?

Ben. No, coz, I rather weep.

Rom. Good heart, at what ?

Ben. At thy good heart's oppression.

Rom. Why, such is love's transgression.¹—

Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast ;
Which thou wilt propagate, to have it prest
With more of thine : this love, that thou hast shown,
Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.
Love is a smoke rais'd with the fume of sighs ;
Being purg'd,^m a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes ;
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears :
What is it else ? a madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.
Farewell, my coz.

[*Going.*

Ben. Soft, I will go along ;
An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

Rom. Tut, I have lost myself ; I am not here ;
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

Ben. Tell me in sadness,ⁿ who she is you love.

Rom. What, shall I groan, and tell thee ?

Ben. Groan ? why, no ;
But sadly tell me, who.

Rom. Bid a sick man in sadness make his will :—
Ah, word ill urg'd to one that is so ill !—
In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

Ben. I aim'd so near, when I suppos'd you lov'd.

Rom. A right good marks-man !—And she's fair, I love.

Ben. A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

Rom. Well, in that hit, you miss : she'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow, she hath Dian's wit ;
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,^o
From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.

¹ *Why, such is love's transgression.*] Such is the consequence of unskilful and mistaken kindness.—JOHNSON.

^m — *purg'd,*] This may mean *purged of smoke* ; but I would rather read, *urged*, i. e. excited, and enforced.—JOHNSON.

ⁿ — *in sadness,*] That is, *in seriousness*.

^o — *in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,*] i. e. In chastity *of proof* ; as we say in *armour of proof*. As this play was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, I cannot help regarding these speeches of Romeo as an oblique com-

She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
 Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
 Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold :
 O, she is rich in beauty ; only poor,
 That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.^p

Ben. Then she hath sworn, that she will still live chaste?

Rom. She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste ;
 For beauty, starv'd with her severity,
 Cuts beauty off from all posterity.
 She is too fair, too wise ; wisely too fair,^a
 To merit bliss by making me despair :
 She hath forsworn to love ; and, in that vow,
 Do I live dead, that live to tell it now.

Ben. Be rul'd by me, forget to think of her.

Rom. O, teach me how I should forget to think.

Ben. By giving liberty unto thine eyes ;
 Examine other beauties.

Rom. 'Tis the way
 To call hers, exquisite, in question more :
 These happy masks,^s that kiss fair ladies' brows,
 Being black, put us in mind they hide the fair ;
 He, that is stricken blind, cannot forget
 The precious treasure of his eyesight lost :
 Show me a mistress that is passing fair,
 What doth her beauty serve,^t but as a note
 Where I may read, who pass'd that passing fair ?
 Farewell ; thou canst not teach me to forget.

Ben. I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt. [*Exeunt.*]

pliment to her majesty, who was not liable to be displeased at hearing her chastity praised after she was suspected to have lost it, or her beauty commended in the sixty-seventh year of her age, though she never possessed any when she was young. Her declaration that she would continue unmarried, increases the probability of the present supposition.—STEEVENS.

^p — *with beauty dies her store.*] She is *rich* in beauty ; and *poor* in this circumstance alone, that with her, beauty will expire ; she will leave the world no copy.—MALONE.

^a — *wisely too fair, &c.*] There is in her too much sanctimonious wisdom united with beauty, which induces her to continue chaste with the hopes of attaining heavenly bliss.—MALONE.

^s *To call hers, exquisite, in question more.*] More into talk ; to make her unparalleled beauty more the subject of thought and conversation.—MALONE.

^s *These happy masks,*]—means no more than *the happy masks*, according to a form of expression not unusual with the old writers.—MALONE and TYRWHITT.

^t *What doth her beauty serve,*] i.e. What end does it answer?—STEEVENS.

SCENE II.

*A Street.**Enter CAPULET, PARIS, and Servant.*

Cap. And Montague is bound as well as I,
In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

Par. Of honourable reckoning are you both;
And pity 'tis, you liv'd at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

Cap. But saying o'er what I have said before:
My child is yet a stranger in the world,
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years;
Let two more summers wither in their pride,
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Par. Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Cap. And too soon marr'd are those so early made.
The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she,
She is the hopeful lady of my earth :^u
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part ;^x
An she agree, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.
This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,
Such as I love; and you, among the store,
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
At my poor house, look to behold this night
Earth-treading stars, that make dark heaven light :
Such comfort, as do lusty young men^y feel
When well apparell'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female buds shall you this night

^u *She is the hopeful lady of my earth :*] This is a Gallicism : *Fille de terre* is the French phrase for an heiress.—STEEVENS.

^x *My will to her consent is but a part ;*] *To*, in this instance, signifies *in comparison with, in proportion to*.—STEEVENS.

^y — *young men*—are certainly *yeomen*. It is not a little singular that in a subsequent act of this play the old copies should, in two places, read “*young trees*” and “*young tree*” instead of *yew trees* and *yew tree*.—RITSON.

Inherit² at my house; hear all, all see,
 And like her most, whose merit most shall be :
 Such, amongst view of many, mine, being one,
 May stand in number, though in reckoning none.^a
 Come, go with me;—Go, sirrah, trudge about
 Through fair Verona; find those persons out,
 Whose names are written there, [*gives a Paper.*] and to
 them say,
 My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET and PARIS.

Serv. Find them out, whose names are written here?
 It is written—that the shoemaker should meddle with his
 yard, and the taylor with his last, the fisher with his
 pencil, and the painter with his nets; but I am sent to
 find those persons, whose names are here writ, and can
 never find what names the writing person hath here writ.
 I must to the learned:—In good time.

Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO.

Ben. Tut, man! one fire burns out another's burning,
 One pain is lessen'd by another's anguish;
 Turn giddy, and be holp by backward turning;
 One desperate grief cures with another's languish :
 Take thou some new infection to thy eye,
 And the rank poison of the old will die.

Rom. Your plaintain leaf is excellent for that.^b

Ben. For what, I pray thee?

Rom. For your broken shin.

Ben. Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

Rom. Not mad, but bound more than a madman is :
 Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
 Whipp'd and tormented, and—Good-e'en, good fellow.

Serv. God gi' good e'en.—I pray, sir, can you read?

² *Inherit*—] i. e. *Possess*, the common use of the word in the language of Shakspeare's age.

^a *Such, amongst view of many, &c.*] This passage is not intelligible as it stands. The old folio reads, "Which one *more view of many*,"—and this leads us to the right reading, which I should suppose to have been this:

"Whilst on *more view of many*," &c.

With this alteration the sense is clear, and the deviation from the folio very trifling.—M. MASON.

^b *Your plaintain leaf is excellent for that.*] The plantain leaf is a blood-stauncher, and was formerly applied to green wounds.—STEVENS.

Rom. Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

Serv. Perhaps you have learn'd it without book :

But I pray, can you read any thing you see?

Rom. Ay, if I know the letters, and the language.

Serv. Ye say honestly; Rest you merry!

Rom. Stay, fellow: I can read. [*Reads.*

Signior Martino, and his wife, and daughters; County Anselme, and his beauteous sisters; The lady widow of Vitruvio; Signior Placentio, and his lovely nieces; Mercutio, and his brother Valentine; Mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daughters; My fair niece Rosaline; Livia; Signior Valentio, and his cousin Tybalt; Lucio, and the lively Helena.

A fair assembly; [*gives back the Note.*] Whither should they come?

Serv. Up.

Rom. Whither?

Serv. To supper; to our house.

Rom. Whose house?

Serv. My master's.

Rom. Indeed, I should have asked you that before.

Serv. Now I'll tell you without asking: My master is the great rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray, come and crush a cup of wine.^c

Rest you merry. [*Exit.*

Ben. At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Sups the fair Rosaline, whom thou so lov'st;
With all the admired beauties of Verona:
Go thither; and, with unattainted eye,
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Rom. When the devout religion of mine eye

Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires!

And these,—who, often drown'd, could never die,—

Transparent hereticks, be burnt for liars!

One fairer than my love! the all-seeing sun

Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

^c — crush a cup of wine.] This cant expression seems to have been once common among low people. We still say, in cant language—to crack a bottle.
—STEEVENS.

Ben. Tut! you saw her fair, none else being by,
Herself pois'd with herself in either eye:
But in those crystal scales, let there be weigh'd
Your lady's love^d against some other maid
That I will show you, shining at this feast,
And she shall scant show well, that now shows best.

Rom. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
But to rejoice in splendour of mine own. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter Lady CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Nurse, where's my daughter? call her forth
to me.

Nurse. Now, by my maiden-head,—at twelve year old,—
I bade her come.—What, lamb! what, lady-bird!—
God forbid!—where's this girl?—what, Juliet!

Enter JULIET.

Jul. How now, who calls?

Nurse.

Your mother.

Jul.

Madam, I am here.

What is your will?

La. Cap. This is the matter:—Nurse, give leave awhile,
We must talk in secret.—Nurse, come back again;
I have remember'd me, thou shalt hear our counsel.
Thou know'st, my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse. 'Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

La. Cap. She's not fourteen.

Nurse.

I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,

And yet, to my teen^e be it spoken, I have but four,—
She is not fourteen.—How long is it now
To Lammas-tide?

La. Cap. A fortnight, and odd days

Nurse. Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas-eve at night, shall she be fourteen.

^d *Your lady's love*—] *Your lady's love* is the love 'you bear to your lady,
which in our language is commonly used for the lady herself.—HEATH.

^e — *teen*—] i. e. Sorrow.

Susan and she,—God rest all Christian souls !
 Were of an age.—Well, Susan is with God ;
 She was too good for me : But, as I said,
 On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen ;
 That shall she, marry ; I remember it well.
 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years ;
 And she was wean'd,—I never shall forget it,—
 Of all the days of the year, upon that day :
 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
 Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall ;
 My lord and you were then at Mantua :—
 Nay, I do bear a brain :—but, as I said,
 When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
 Of my dug, and felt it bitter, pretty fool !
 To see it tetchy, and fall out with the dug.
 Shake, quoth the dove-house : 'twas no need, I trow,
 To bid me trudge.

And since that time it is eleven years :
 For then she could stand alone ; nay, by the rood,
 She could have run and waddled all about.
 For even the day before, she broke her brow :
 And then my husband—God be with his soul !
 'A was a merry man ;—took up the child :
Yea, quoth he, dost thou fall upon thy face ?
Thou wilt fall backward, when thou hast more wit ;
Wilt thou not, Jule ? and, by my holy dam,
 The pretty wretch left crying, and said—*Ay :*
 To see now, how a jest shall come about !
 I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,
 I never should forget it ; *Wilt thou not, Jule ?* quoth he :
 And, pretty fool, it stinted,^f and said—*Ay.*

La. Cap. Enough of this ; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

Nurse. Yes, madam ; yet I cannot choose but laugh,
 To think it should leave crying, and say—*Ay :*
 And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
 A bump as big as a young cockrel's stone ;
 A parlous knock ; and it cried bitterly.
Yea, quoth my husband, fall'st upon thy face ?

^f — it stinted,] i. e. It stopped, it forbore from weeping.—STEEVENS.

*Thou wilt fall backward, when thou com'st to age ;
Wilt thou not, Jule?* it stinted, and said—*Ay.*

Jul. And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

Nurse. Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd : [grace!
An I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.

La. Cap. Marry, that marry is the very theme
I came to talk of :—Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married ?

Jul. It is an honour that I dream not of.

Nurse. An honour ! were not I thine only nurse,
I'd say, thou hadst suck'd wisdom from thy teat.

La. Cap. Well, think of marriage now ; younger than
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem, [you,
Are made already mothers : by my count,
I was your mother much upon these years
That you are now a maid. Thus then, in brief ;—
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

Nurse. A man, young lady ! lady, such a man,
As all the world—Why, he's a man of wax.^g

La. Cap. Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

Nurse. Nay, he's a flower ; in faith, a very flower.

La. Cap. What say you ? can you love the gentleman ?
This night you shall behold him at our feast :
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen ;
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content ;
And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies,
Find written in the margin of his eyes.^h
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover :
The fish lives in the sea ;ⁱ and 'tis much pride,
For fair without the fair within to hide ;

^g ——— *a man of wax.*] i. e. *Well made*, as if he had been modelled in wax.
—S. W.

^h ——— *the margin of his eyes.*] The comments on ancient books were always
printed in the margin.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ *The fish lives in the sea ; &c.*] i. e. *Is not yet caught.* Fish-skin covers to
books anciently were not uncommon.—STEEVENS.

That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;^k
So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him, making yourself no less.

Nurse. No less? nay, bigger; women grow by men.

La. Cap. Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

Jul. I'll look to like, if looking liking move:

But no more deep will I endart mine eye,
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called, my young lady asked for, the nurse cursed in the pantry, and every thing in extremity. I must hence to wait; I beseech you, follow straight.

La. Cap. We follow thee.—Juliet, the country stays.

Nurse. Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Street.

Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO,¹ BENVOLIO, with five or six Maskers, Torch-bearers, and others.

Rom. What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?
Or shall we on without apology?

Ben. The date is out of such prolixity:^m
We'll have no Cupid hood-wink'd with a scarf,
Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,ⁿ
Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper;
Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke

^k — golden story;] i. e. Any valuable writing.—M. MASON.

¹ *Mercutio,*] Shakspeare appears to have formed this character on the following slight hint in the original story:—"Another gentleman, called *Mercutio*, which was a courtlike gentleman, very wel beloved of all men, and by reason of his pleasant and curteous behaviour, was in al companies wel entertained." *Painter's Palace of Pleasure*, tom. ii. p. 221.—STEEVENS.

^m *The date is out of such prolixity;*] Introductory speeches are out of date or fashion.

ⁿ — a Tartar's bow—] Resembles in its form the old Roman or Cupid's bow, such as we see on medals and bas reliefs. Shakspeare uses the epithet to distinguish it from the English bow, whose shape is the segment of a circle.—DOUCE.

After the prompter, for our entrance :

But, let them measure us by what they will,
We'll measure them a measure,^o and be gone.

Rom. Give me a torch,^p—I am not for this ambling;
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

Mer. Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

Rom. Not I, believe me : you have dancing shoes,
With nimble soles : I have a soul of lead,
So stakes me to the ground, I cannot move.

Mer. You are a lover ; borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound.

Rom. I am too sore enpierced with his shaft,
To soar with his light feathers ; and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe :
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

Mer. And, to sink in it, should you burden love ;
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

Rom. Is love a tender thing ? it is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous ; and it pricks like thorn.

Mer. If love be rough with you, be rough with love ;
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.—
Give me a case to put my visage in : [*Putting on a Mask.*]
A visor for a visor !—what care I,
What curious eye doth quote^q deformities ?
Here are the beetle-brows, shall blush for me.

Ben. Come, knock, and enter ; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.

Rom. A torch for me : let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels ;^r
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase,—
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on,—
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.^s

Mer. Tut ! dun's the mouse, the constable's own word :

^o *We'll measure them a measure,*] i. e. We'll dance a dance.

^p *Give me a torch,*] A torch-bearer seems to have been a constant appendage on every troop of masks, and was not reckoned a degrading office.—STEEVENS.

^q — *quote*—] i. e. *Observe*.

^r *Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels ;*] It has been already observed, that it was anciently the custom to strew rooms with *rushes*, before carpets were in use.—STEEVENS.

^s *I'll be a candle-holder, and look on,*—

The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.] An allusion to an old proverbial saying, which advises to give over when the game is at the fairest.—RITSON.

If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire^t
Of this (save reverence^u) love, wherein thou stick'st
Up to the ears.—Come, we burn day-light, ho.

Rom. Nay, that's not so.

Mer. I mean, sir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.
Take our good meaning : for our judgment sits
Five times in that, ere once in our five wits.^x

Rom. And we mean well, in going to this mask ;
But 'tis no wit to go.

Mer. Why, may one ask ?

Rom. I dreamt a dream to-night.

Mer. And so did I.

Rom. Well, what was yours ?

Mer. That dreamers often lie.

Rom. In bed, asleep, while they do dream things true.

Mer. O, then, I see, queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife;^y and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone

^t — *dun's the mouse*, &c.] A proverbial saying of rather vague signification, alluding to the colour of the mouse, but frequently employed with no other intent than that of quibbling on the word *done*. Why it is attributed to a constable, I know not.—NARES. "*Dun out of the mire*," was the name of a game, at which Mr. Gifford remembers playing, and which he thus describes. "A log of wood is brought into the midst of the room : this is *dun*, (the cart-horse,) and a cry is raised that he is stuck in the *mire* : two of the company advance, either with or without ropes, to draw him out. After repeated attempts, they find themselves unable to do it, and call for more assistance. The game continues till all the company take part in it, when *dun* is extricated of course ; and the merriment arises from the awkward and affected efforts of the rustics to lift the log, and sundry arch contrivances to let the ends of it fall on one another's toes." *Ben Jonson*, vol. viii. p. 283.

^u — *save reverence*—] An allusion to the good old custom of apologizing for the introduction of a free expression, by bowing to the principal person in company, and saying, Sir, *with reverence*, or, Sir, *reverence*.—GIFFORD. *Ben Jonson*, vol. vi. p. 149.

^x — *five wits*.] i. e. *Five senses*.

^y — *the fairies' midwife* ;] i. e. *The midwife among the fairies*, because it was her peculiar employment to steal the new-born babe in the night, and to leave another in its place. The poet here uses her *general* appellation, and character, which yet has so far a proper reference to the present train of fiction, as that her illusions were practised on persons in bed or asleep ; for she not only haunted women in child-bed, but was likewise the incubus or night-mare. Shakspeare, by employing her here, alludes at large to her midnight pranks performed on sleepers : but denominates her from the most notorious one, of her personating the drowsy midwife, who was insensibly carried away into some distant water, and substituting a new birth in the bed or cradle. It would clear the appellation to read the *fairy midwife*. The poet avails himself of Mab's appropriate province, by giving her this nocturnal agency.—T. WARTON.

On the fore-finger of an alderman,
 Drawn with a team of little atomies^z
 Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep :
 Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs ;
 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers ;
 The traces, of the smallest spider's web ;
 The collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams :
 Her whip, of cricket's bone ; the lash, of film :
 Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
 Not half so big as a round little worm
 Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid :
 Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
 Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
 Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.
 And in this state she gallops night by night
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love :
 On courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight :
 O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees :
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream ;
 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
 Because their breaths with sweet-meats tainted are.
 Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit :^a
 And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
 Then dreams he of another benefice :
 Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,^b
 Of healths five fathom deep ; and then anon
 Drums in his ear ; at which he starts, and wakes ;
 And, being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two,
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab,
 That plats the manes of horses in the night ;
 And cakes the elf-locks^c in foul sluttish hairs,

^z — *of little atomies*—] An obsolete substitute for *atoms*.

^a — *a suit* :] *A court solicitation*.—WARBURTON.

^b — *Spanish blades*,] A sword is called a toledo, from the excellence of the Toletan steel.—STEEVENS.

^c *And cakes the elf-locks*—] *Elf-locks* are locks of hair clotted together. It was supposed to be a spiteful amusement of queen Mab, and her subjects, to twist

Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.
 This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
 That presses them, and learns them first to bear,
 Making them women of good carriage.
 This, this is she—

Rom. Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace;
 Thou talk'st of nothing.

Mer. True, I talk of dreams;
 Which are the children of an idle brain,
 Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
 Which is as thin of substance as the air;
 And more inconstant than the wind, who woos
 Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
 And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
 Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

Ben. This wind, you talk of, blows us from ourselves;
 Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

Rom. I fear, too early: for my mind misgives,
 Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
 Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
 With this night's revels; and expire^e the term
 Of a despised life, clos'd in my breast,
 By some vile forfeit of untimely death:
 But He, that hath the steerage of my course,
 Direct my sail!—On, lusty gentlemen.

Ben. Strike, drum. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A Hall in Capulet's House. Musicians waiting.

Enter Servants.

1 Serv. Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away?
 he shift a trencher!^f he scrape a trencher!

the hair of human creatures, as the manes and tails of horses, into hard knots, which it was not fortunate to untangle.—NARES. In reading, "*cakes* the elf-locks," instead of "*bakes* the elf-locks," I have printed the words as I find them quoted in the invaluable glossary from which the above note is taken.

^e — *expire*—] i. e. *Exhaust, or wear out.*

^f — *shift a trencher!*] This expression was technical with servants. *Trenchers* were still used by persons of good fashion in our author's time.—REED and PERCY.

2 *Serv.* When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

1 *Serv.* Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard,^g look to the plate:—good thou, save me a piece of marchpane;^h and, as thou lovest me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone, and Nell.—Antony! and Potpan!

2 *Serv.* Ay, boy; ready.

1 *Serv.* You are look'd for, and called for, asked for, and sought for, in the great chamber.

2 *Serv.* We cannot be here and there too.—Cheerly, boys; be brisk a while, and the longer liver take all.

[*They retire behind.*]

Enter CAPULET, &c. with the Guests, and the Maskers.

Cap. Gentlemen, welcome! ladies, that have their toes Unplagu'd with corns, will have a bout with you:—
Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all
Will now deny to dance? she that makes dainty, she,
I'll swear, hath corns; Am I come near you now?
You are welcome; gentlemen! I have seen the day,
That I have worn a visor; and could tell
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
Such as would please;—'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone:
You are welcome, gentlemen!—Come, musicians, play.
A hall! a hall!ⁱ give room, and foot it, girls.

[*Musick plays, and they dance.*]

More light, ye knaves; and turn the tables up.^k
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.—
Ah, sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet;
For you and I are past our dancing days:

^g — *court-cupboard.*] Apparently a kind of moveable closet or buffet, in which plate or other articles of luxury were displayed.—NARES.

^h — *marchpane;*] A cake composed of filberts, almonds, pistachoes, pine-kernels, and sugar of roses, with a small proportion of flour. Our macaroons are only debased and diminutive *marchpanes*.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ *A hall! a hall!*] An exclamation signifying *make room*.—STEEVENS.

^k — *turn the tables up.*] Before this phrase is generally intelligible, it should be observed that ancient tables were flat leaves, joined by hinges, and placed on tressels. When they were to be removed, they were therefore *turned up*.—STEEVENS.

How long is't now, since last yourself and I
Were in a mask?

2 *Cap.* By'r lady, thirty years.

1 *Cap.* What, man! 'tis not so much, 'tis not so much:
'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,
Come pentecost as quickly as it will,
Some five and twenty years; and then we mask'd.

2 *Cap.* 'Tis more, 'tis more: his son is elder, sir:
His son is thirty.

1 *Cap.* Will you tell me that?
His son was but a ward two years ago.

Rom. What lady's that, which doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight?

Serv. I know not, sir.

Rom. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night¹
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear:
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make happy my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tyb. This, by his voice, should be a Montague:—
Fetch me my rapier, boy:—What! dares the slave
Come hither, cover'd with an antick face,
To f leer and scorn at our solemnity?
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

1 *Cap.* Why, how now, kinsman? wherefore storm you
so?

Tyb. Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe;
A villain, that is hither come in spite,
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

1 *Cap.* Young Romeo is't?

Tyb. 'Tis he, that villain Romeo

1 *Cap.* Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone,

¹ *It seems she hangs upon—*] This is the reading of every one of the old copies, with the exception of the second folio, which reads "*her beauty hangs upon.*"

He bears him like a portly gentleman ;
 And, to say truth, Verona brags of him,
 To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth :
 I would not for the wealth of all this town,
 Here in my house, do him disparagement :
 Therefore be patient, take no note of him,
 It is my will ; the which if thou respect,
 Show a fair presence, and put off these frowns,
 An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

Tyb. It fits, when such a villain is a guest ;
 I'll not endure him.

1 Cap. He shall be endur'd ;
 What, goodman boy !—I say, he shall ;—Go to ;—
 Am I the master here, or you ? go to.
 You'll not endure him !—God shall mend my soul—
 You'll make a mutiny among my guests !
 You will set cock-a-hoop ! you'll be the man !

Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

1 Cap. Go to, go to,
 You are a saucy boy :—Is't so, indeed ?—
 'This trick may chance to scath you ;^m—I know what.
 You must contráry me ! marry, 'tis time—
 Well said, my hearts :—You are a princox ;ⁿ go :—
 Be quiet, or—More light, more light, for shame !—
 I'll make you quiet ; What !—Cheerly, my hearts.

Tyb. Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting,
 Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
 I will withdraw : but this intrusion shall,
 Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall. [Exit.]

Rom. If I profane with my unworthy hand

[To JULIET.]

This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,—
 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Jul. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
 Which mannerly devotion shows in this ;
 For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
 And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

^m ——— to scath you ;] i. e. To do you an injury.

ⁿ ——— princox ;] i. e. A pert, forward youth ; probably corrupted from the Latin *præcox*.—NARES.

Rom. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

Jul. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

Rom. O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;

They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.^o

Jul. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

Rom. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purg'd.

[*Kissing her.*^p

Jul. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

Rom. Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urg'd!
Give me my sin again.

Jul. You kiss by the book.

Nurse. Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

Rom. What is her mother?

Nurse. Marry, bachelor,

Her mother is the lady of the house,

And a good lady, and a wise, and virtuous:

I nurs'd her daughter, that you talk'd withal;

I tell you,—he, that can lay hold of her,

Shall have the chinks.

Rom. Is she a Capulet?

O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.

Ben. Away, begone; the sport is at the best.

Rom. Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

1 Cap. Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;
We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.¹

Is it e'en so? Why, then I thank you all;

I thank you, honest gentlemen; good night:—

More torches here!—Come on, then let's to bed.

Ah, sirrah, [*to 2 Cap.*] by my fay, it waxes late;

I'll to my rest. [*Exeunt all but JULIET and Nurse.*

^o O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;

They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair;] Juliet had said before, that "Palm to palm was holy palmers' kiss." She afterwards says, that "palmers have lips which they must use in prayer." Romeo replies, "*that the prayer of his lips was, that they might do what hands do;* that is, that they might kiss.—*M. MALONE.*

^p [*kissing her.*] Our poet here, without doubt, copied from the mode of his own time; and kissing a lady in a publick assembly, we may conclude, was not thought indecorous. In *King Henry VIII.* he in like manner makes Lord Sands kiss Anne Boleyn.—*MALONE.*

¹ — *towards.*] i.e. *Ready, at hand.* A banquet corresponded with our *desert*, and was a collation of fruit, wine, &c.

Jul. Come hither, nurse : What is yon gentleman ?

Nurse. The son and heir of old Tiberio.

Jul. What's he, that now is going out of door ?

Nurse. Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

Jul. What's he, that follows there, that would not dance ?

Nurse. I know not.

Jul. Go, ask his name :—if he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse. His name is Romeo, and a Montague ;
The only son of your great enemy.

Jul. My only love sprung from my only hate !
Too early seen unknown, and known too late !
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Nurse. What's this ? what's this ?

Jul. A rhyme I learn'd even now
Of one I danc'd withal. [*One calls within, JULIET.*]

Nurse. Anon, anon :—
Come, let's away ; the strangers are all gone. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter CHORUS.

Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir ;
That fair,^r which love groan'd for, and would die,
With tender Juliet match'd, is now not fair.
Now Romeo is belov'd, and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks ;
But to his foe suppos'd he must complain,
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks :
Being held a foe, he may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear ;
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new-beloved any where :
But passion lends them power, time means to meet,
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet. [*Exit.*]

^r *Thât fair,*] *Fair*, it has been already observed, was formerly used as a substantive, and was synonymous to beauty.—MALONE.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An open Place adjoining Capulet's Garden.**Enter ROMEO.*

Rom. Can I go forward, when my heart is here?
 Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out.
[He climbs the Wall, and leaps down within it.]

*Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.**Ben.* Romeo! my cousin Romeo!*Mer.*

He is wise;

And, on my life, hath stolen him home to bed.

Ben. He ran this way, and leap'd this orchard wall:
 Call, good Mercutio.

Mer.

Nay, I'll conjure too.

Romeo! humours! madman! passion! lover!

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh,

Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied;

Cry but—Ah me! couple but—love and dove;

Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,

One nick-name for her purblind son and heir

Young Adam Cupid,^s he that shot so trim,When king Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid.^t—

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;

The ape is dead,^u and I must conjure him.—

I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,

By her high forehead,^x and her scarlet lip,

By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,

And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,

That in thy likeness thou appear to us.

Ben. An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.^s — *Adam Cupid,*] Alluding to the famous archer *Adam Bell*.—REED.^t *When king Cophetua, &c.*] Alluding to an old ballad preserved in the first volume of *Dr. Percy's Reliques of ancient English Poetry*.—STEEVENS.^u *The ape is dead,*] This phrase appears to have been frequently applied to young men, in our author's time, without any reference to the mimickry of that animal. It was an expression of tenderness, like *poor fool*.—MALONE.^x *By her high forehead,*] A high forehead was in Shakspeare's time thought eminently beautiful.—MALONE.

Mer. This cannot anger him: 'twould anger him
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
Till she had laid it, and conjur'd it down;
That were some spite: my invocation
Is fair and honest, and, in his mistress' name,
I conjure only but to raise up him.

Ben. Come, he hath hid himself among those trees,
To be consorted with the humorous^y night:
Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

Mer. If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree,
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit,
As maids call medlars, when they laugh alone.—
Romeo, good night;—I'll to my truckle-bed;
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep:
Come, shall we go?

Ben. Go, then; for 'tis in vain
To seek him here, that means not to be found. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Capulet's Garden.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. He jests at scars,^z that never felt a wound.—

[*JULIET appears above, at a Window.*]

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks!
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid,^a since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.—
It is my lady; O, it is my love:

^y ——— *humorous*—] i. e. *Moist, humid*. It is used in the same sense by other writers of Shakspeare's time.

^z *He jests at scars,*] That is, Mercutio jests, whom he has overheard.—
JOHNSON.

^a *Be not her maid,*] Be not a votary to the moon, to Diana.—JOHNSON.

O, that she knew she were !
 She speaks, yet she says nothing; What of that ?
 Her eye discourses, I will answer it.—
 I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks :
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head ?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright,
 That birds would sing, and think it were not night.
 See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand !
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek !

Jul.

Ah me !

Rom.

She speaks :—

O, speak again, bright angel ! for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
 As is a winged messenger of heaven
 Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
 Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo ! wherefore art thou Romeo ?
 Deny thy father, and refuse thy name :
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this ?

[*Aside.*

Jul. 'Tis but thy name, that is my enemy ;—
 Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.^b
 What's Montague ? it is nor hand, nor foot,
 Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
 Belonging to a man. O, be some other name !
 What's in a name ? that which we call a rose,
 By any other name would smell as sweet ;

^b *Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.*] *Though* is here used in the sense of *then*, as is very frequent in our ancient poets, and sometimes by our author himself.—RITSON.

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes,
Without that title:—Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Jul. What man art thou, that, thus bescreen'd in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Jul. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound;
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.^c

Jul. How cam'st thou hither, tell me? and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these
For stony limits cannot hold love out: [walls;
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let^d to me.

Jul. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Rom. Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Jul. I would not for the world, they saw thee here.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight:
And, thou but love me,^e let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Jul. By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

^c — *dislike,*]—here means *displease*.

^d — *no let—*] i. e. No stop or hinderance.

^e *And, thou but love me,*] i. e. *Unless thou love me.*—M. MASON.

Rom. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Jul. Thou know'st, the mask of night is on my face;
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke; But farewell compliment!^f
Dost thou love me? I know, thou wilt say—Ay;
And I will take thy word: yet, if thou swear'st,
Thou may'st prove false; at lovers' perjuries,
They say, Jove laughs. O, gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but, else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
And therefore thou may'st think my haviour light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.^g
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou over-heard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me;
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops,—

Jul. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by?

Jul. Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

^f — *farewell compliment!*] i. e. Farewell attention to forms.—M. MASON.

^g — *to be strange.*] i. e. To put on affected coldness, to appear shy.—STEEVENS.

Rom. If my heart's dear love—

Jul. Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contráct to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say—It lightens. Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart, as that within my breast!

Rom. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Jul. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

Rom. The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Jul. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

Rom. Would'st thou withdraw it? for what purpose,
love?

Jul. But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

[*Nurse calls within.*

I hear some noise within; Dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[*Exit.*

Rom. O blessed blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET above.

Jul. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night, indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where, and what time, thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee my lord throughout the world:

Nurse. [*within.*] Madam.

Jul. I come, anon:—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee,—

Nurse. [*within.*] Madam.

Jul. By and by, I come:—
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.

Rom. So thrive my soul,—

Jul. A thousand times good night! [*Exit.*

Rom. A thousand times the worse, to want thy
light.—

Love goes toward love, as school-boys from their books;
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

[*Retiring slowly.*

Re-enter JULIET, above.

Jul. Hist! Romeo, hist!—O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!^h
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

Rom. It is my soul, that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest musick to attending ears!

Jul. Romeo!

Rom. My sweet!

Jul. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

Rom. At the hour of nine.

Jul. I will not fail; 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Rom. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Jul. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

^h *To lure this tassel-gentle back again!*] The *tassel* or *tiercel* (for so it should be spelt) is the male of the *goshawk*; so called, because it is a *tierce* or *third* less than the female. This is equally true of all birds of prey. It had the epithet of *gentle* annexed to it, from the ease with which it was tamed, and its attachment to man. From old books on the subject of falconry, we find that certain hawks were considered as appropriated to certain ranks. The *tercel-gentle* was appropriated to the prince.—STEEVENS and MALONE.

Rom. And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

Jul. 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone :
And yet no further than a wanton's bird ;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Rom. I would, I were thy bird.

Jul. Sweet, so would I :
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night ! parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say—good night, till it be morrow. [*Exit.*]

Rom. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy
breast !—
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest !
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell ;
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE, with a basket.

Fri. The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light ;
And fleckedⁱ darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day's path-way, made by Titan's wheels :
Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
I must up-fill this osier cage of ours,
With baleful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers.
The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb ;
What is her burying grave, that is her womb :
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find ;
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.

ⁱ — *flecked*—] i. e. *Streaked*.

O, mickle is the powerful grace,^k that lies
 In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities :
For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give ;
 Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use,
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse :
 Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied ;
 And vice sometime's by action dignified.
 Within the infant rind of this small flower
 Poison hath residence, and med'cine power.
 For this, being smelt, with that part^l cheers each part ;
 Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
 Two such opposed foes encamp them still
 In man as well as herbs, grace, and rude will ;
 And, where the worser is predominant,
 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Good morrow, father!

Fri. *Benedicite!*

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?—
 Young son, it argues a distemper'd head,
 So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed :
 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
 And where care lodges, sleep will never lie ;
 But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
 Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign :
 Therefore thy earliness doth me assure,
 Thou art up-rous'd by some distemp'rature ;
 Or if not so, then here I hit it right—
 Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

Rom. That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

Fri. God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

Rom. With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no ;
 I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

Fri. That's my good son: But where hast thou been
 then?

Rom. I'll tell thee, ere thou ask it me again.

^k — *powerful grace,*] Efficacious virtue.

^l — *with that part—*] i. e. With the part which smells; with the olfactory nerves.—MALONE.

I have been feasting with mine enemy ;
Where, on a sudden, one hath wounded me,
That's by me wounded ; both our remedies
Within thy help and holy physick lies :
I bear no hatred, blessed man ; for, lo,
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

Fri. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift ;
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Rom. Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet :
As mine on her's, so her's is set on mine ;
And all combin'd, save what thou must combine
By holy marriage : When, and where, and how,
We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass ; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us this day.

Fri. Holy Saint Francis ! what a change is here !
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken ? young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

Jesu Maria ! what a deal of brine
Hath wash'd thy shallow cheeks for Rosaline !
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste !
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears ;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet :
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline ;
And art thou chang'd ? pronounce this sentence then—
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.

Rom. Thou chidd'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

Fri. For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

Rom. And bad'st me bury love.

Fri. Not in a grave,
To lay one in, another out to have.

Rom. I pray thee, chide not : she, whom I love now,
Doth grace for grace, and love for love allow ;
The other did not so.

Fri. O, she knew well,
Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.
But come, young waverer, come go with me,
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;
For this alliance may so happy prove,
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

Rom. O, let us hence ; I stand on sudden haste.^m

Fri. Wisely, and slow ; They stumble, that run fast.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Street.

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.

Mer. Where the devil should this Romeo be ?
Came he not home to-night ?

Ben. Not to his father's ; I spoke with his man.

Mer. Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,

Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

Ben. Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

Mer. A challenge, on my life.

Ben. Romeo will answer it.

Mer. Any man, that can write, may answer a letter.

Ben. Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares, being dared.

Mer. Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead ! stabbed with a white wench's black eye ; shot through the ear with a love-song ; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft ;ⁿ And is he a man to encounter Tybalt ?

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt ?

Mer. More than prince of cats,^o I can tell you. O, he

^m *I stand on sudden haste.*] i. e. It is of the utmost consequence for me to be hasty.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ ——— *the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft ;*] The allusion is to archery. The clout or white mark at which the arrows are directed, was fastened by a black pin placed in the center of it. To hit this was the highest ambition of every marksman.—MALONE.

^o *More than prince of cats,*] *Tybert*, the name given to the *cat*, in the story-book of *Reynard the Fox*.—WARBURTON.

is the courageous captain of compliments.^p He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a gentleman of the very first house,—of the first and second cause:^q Ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hay!^r

Ben. The what?

Mer. The pox of such antick, lipping, affecting fantasicoes; these new tuners of accents!—*By Jesu, a very good blade!—a very tall man!—a very good whore!*—Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these *pardonnez-moys*,^s who stand so much on the new form, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench?^t O their *bons*, their *bons*!

Enter ROMEO.

Ben. Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

Mer. Without his roe,^u like a dried herring:—O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!—Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flow'd in: Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen-wench;—marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her: Dido, a dowdy; Cleopatra, a gipsy; Helen and Hero, hildings and harlots; Thisbé, a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose.—Signior Romeo, *bon jour*! there's a French

^p — captain of compliments.] i. e. A complete master of all the laws of ceremony, the principal man in the doctrine of punctilio.—JOHNSON.

^q — a gentleman of the very first house,—of the first and second cause:] i. e. A gentleman of the first rank, of the first eminence among these duellists; and will tell you of the first cause, and the second cause, for which a man is to fight. The clown in *As you like it*, talks of the seventh cause in the same sense.—STEEVENS.

^r — the hay!] All the terms of the modern fencing-school were originally Italian; the rapier, or small thrusting-sword, being first used in Italy. The *hay* is the word *hai*, you have it, used when a thrust reaches the antagonist, from which our fencers, on the same occasion, without knowing, I suppose, any reason for it, cry out *ha*!—JOHNSON.

^s — *pardonnez-moys*,] Such was the expression of doubt or hesitation among men of the sword, when the point of honour was grown so delicate, that no other mode of contradiction would be endured.—JOHNSON.

^t — new form—old bench?] The conceit is lost, if the double meaning of the word *form* be not attended to.—FARMER.

^u Without his roe,] i. e. He comes but the half of himself: he is only a sigh—O me! i. e. me O! the half of his name.—SEYMOUR.

salutation to your French slop.^x You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

Mer. The slip, sir, the slip;^y Can you not conceive?

Rom. Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and in such a case as mine, a man may strain courtesy.

Mer. That's as much as to say—such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

Rom. Meaning—to court'sy.

Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Rom. A most courteous exposition.

Mer. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Rom. Pink for flower.

Mer. Right.

Rom. Why, then is my pump well flowered.^z

Mer. Well said: Follow me this jest now, till thou hast worn out thy pump; that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

Rom. O single-soled^a jest, solely singular for the singleness!

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits fail.

Rom. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.

Mer. Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase,^b I have done; for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits, than, I am sure, I have in my whole five: Was I with you there for the goose?

^x — your French slop.] Slops are large loose breeches or trousers, worn at present only by sailors.—STEEVENS.

^y The slip, sir, the slip;] To understand this play upon the words counterfeit and slip, it should be observed that, in our author's time, there was a counterfeit piece of money distinguished by the name of a slip.—STEEVENS.

^z — my pump well flowered.] i. e. For they were pinked or punched with holes in figures.—JOHNSON.

^a — single-soled—] i. e. Slight, unsolid, feeble.—STEEVENS.

^b — if thy wits run the wild-goose chase,] One kind of horse-race, which resembled the flight of wild-geese, was formerly known by this name. Two horses were started together; and which ever rider could get the lead, the other was obliged to follow him over whatever ground the foremost jockey chose to go. That horse which could distance the other, won the race.—HOLT WHITE.

Rom. Thou wast never with me for any thing, when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not.^c

Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting;^d it is a most sharp sauce.

Rom. And is it not well served in to a sweet goose?

Mer. O, here's a wit of cheverel,^e that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

Rom. I stretch it out for that word—broad: which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature: for this drivelling love is like a great natural, that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Ben. Stop there, stop there.

Mer. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.^f

Ben. Thou would'st else have made thy tale large.

Mer. O, thou art deceived, I would have made it short: for I was come to the whole depth of my tale: and meant, indeed, to occupy the argument no longer.

Rom. Here's goodly geer!

Enter Nurse and PETER.

Mer. A sail, a sail, a sail!

Ben. Two, two; a shirt, and a smock.

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon?

Nurse. My fan, Peter.^g

^c — good goose, bite not.] This is a proverbial expression to be found in Ray's Collection.—STEEVENS.

^d — bitter sweeting;]—is an apple of that name.

^e — cheverel,] i. e. Soft leather for gloves.

^f — against the hair.] *A contrepoil*: Fr. An expression equivalent to one which we now use, "against the grain."—STEEVENS.

^g *My fan, Peter.*] The business of *Peter* carrying the *nurse's fan*, seems ridiculous according to modern manners; but I find such was formerly the practice.—FARMER.

Mer. Pr'ythee, do, good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer of the two.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mer. God ye good den,^b fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good den?

Mer. 'Tis no less, I tell you; for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

Nurse. Out upon you! what a man are you?

Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said;—For himself to mar, quoth'a?—Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

Rom. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him, than he was when you sought him: I am the youngest of that name, for 'fault of a worse.

Nurse. You say well.

Mer. Yea, is the worst well? very well took, i'faith; wisely, wisely.

Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

Ben. She will indite him to some supper.

Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?

Mer. No hare, sir;ⁱ unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.^k

*An old hare hoar,
And an old hare hoar,
Is very good meat in lent:
But a hare that is hoar,
Is too much for a score,
When it hoars ere it be spent.—*

Romeo, will you come to your father's? we'll to dinner thither.

^b *God ye good den,*] i. e. God give you good even.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ *No hare, sir;*] Mercutio having roared out *so ho!* the cry of the sportsmen when they start a hare, Romeo asks *what he has found?* and Mercutio answers, *No hare, &c.* The rest is a series of quibbles unworthy of explanation, which he who does not understand, needs not lament his ignorance.—JOHNSON.

^k In the quarto, 1597, we have here this stage-direction: *He walks between them* (i. e. the Nurse and Peter) *and sings*.—MALONE.

Rom. I will follow you.

Mer. Farewell, ancient lady; farewell, lady, lady, lady.¹

[*Exeunt* MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.]

Nurse. Marry, farewell!—I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant^m was this, that was so full of his ropery?ⁿ

Rom. A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk; and will speak more in a minute, than he will stand to in a month.

Nurse. An 'a speak any thing against me, I'll take him down an 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; an if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates:^o—And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

Pet. I saw no man use you at his pleasure: if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you: I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

Nurse. Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave!—Pray you, sir, a word: and as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out; what she bade me say, I will keep to myself: but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behaviour, as they say: for the gentlewoman is young; and, therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly, it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

Rom. Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee,—

Nurse. Good heart! and, i'faith, I will tell her as much: Lord, lord, she will be a joyful woman.

Rom. What wilt thou tell her, nurse? thou dost not mark me.

¹ — lady, lady, lady!] The burthen of an old song.

^m — merchant—] Used in contradistinction to *gentleman*; shewing that the person shewed by his behaviour he was a low fellow.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ — ropery?] i. e. *Roguary*.

^o — skains-mates:] I am inclined to think that the old lady means, “roaring or swaggering companions.”—NARES.

Nurse. I will tell her, sir,—that you do protest; which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

Rom. Bid her devise some means to come to shrift This afternoon;

And there she shall at friar Laurence' cell
Be shriv'd, and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse. No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Rom. Go to; I say, you shall.

Nurse. This afternoon, sir? well, she shall be there.

Rom. And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey-wall:
Within this hour my man shall be with thee;
And bring thee cords, made like a tackled stair:^p
Which to the high top-gallant^q of my joy
Must be my convoy in the secret night.
Farewell!—Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains,
Farewell!—Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse. Now God in heaven bless thee!—Hark you, sir.

Rom. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

Nurse. Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say—
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

Rom. I warrant thee; my man's as true as steel.

Nurse. Well, sir; my mistress is the sweetest lady—
Lord, lord! when 'twas a little prating thing,—O, there's
a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife
aboard; but she, good soul, had as lieve see a toad, a very
toad, as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell her
that Paris is the properer man; but, I'll warrant you,
when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout in the varsal
world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a
letter?

Rom. Ay, nurse; What of that? both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R. is for
the dog.^r No; I know it begins with some other letter:
and she hath the prettiest sententious of it, of you and
rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

^p — like a tackled stair:] Like stairs of rope in the tackle of a ship.—
JOHNSON.

^q — top-gallant—] i. e. The highest extremity of the mast of a ship.—
STEEVENS.

^r — R. is for the dog.] “R. is the dog's letter. *Irritatu canis quod homo
quam plenius dicit.*”—GILFORD'S *Ben Jonson*, vol. iv. 87.

Rom. Commend me to thy lady. [*Exit.*

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times.—Peter!

Pet. Anon?

Nurse. Peter, Take my fan, and go before. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Capulet's Garden.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. The clock struck nine, when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promis'd to return.
Perchance, she cannot meet him:—that's not so.—
O, she is lame! love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,
Driving back shadows over low'ring hills:
Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
Now is the sun upon the highest hill
Of this day's journey; and from nine till twelve
Is three long hours,—yet she is not come.
Had she affections, and warm youthful blood,
She'd be as swift in motion as a ball;
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
And his to me:
But old folks, many feign as they were dead;
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

Enter Nurse and PETER.

O God, she comes!—O honey nurse, what news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

Nurse. Peter, stay at the gate. [*Exit PETER.*

Jul. Now, good sweet nurse!—O lord! why look'st
thou sad?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;
If good, thou sham'st the musick of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am aweary, give me leave a while;—
Fye, how my bones ake! What a jaunt have I had!

Jul. I would, thou hadst my bones, and I thy news :
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak ;—good, good nurse, speak.

Nurse. Jesu, What haste ? can you not stay awhile ?
Do you not see, that I am out of breath ?

Jul. How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath
To say to me—that thou art out of breath ?
The excuse, that thou dost make in this delay,
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
Is thy news good, or bad ? answer to that ;
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance :
Let me be satisfied, Is't good or bad ?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice ; you know
not how to choose a man : Romeo ! no, not he ; though
his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all
men's ; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body,—though
they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare :
He is not the flower of courtesy,—but, I'll warrant him, as
gentle as a lamb.—Go thy ways, wench ; serve God.—
What, have you dined at home ?

Jul. No, no : But all this did I know before ;
What says he of our marriage ? what of that ?

Nurse. Lord how my head akes ! what a head have I ?
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces,
My back o' t'other side,—O, my back, my back !
Beshrew your heart, for sending me about,
To catch my death with jaunting up and down !

Jul. I'faith, I am sorry that thou art not well :
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love ?

Nurse. Your love says like an honest gentleman,
And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,
And, I warrant, a virtuous :—Where is your mother ?

Jul. Where is my mother ?—why, she is within ;
Where should she be ? How oddly thou reply'st !
Your love says like an honest gentleman,—
Where is your mother ?

Nurse. O, God's lady dear !
Are you so hot ? Marry, come up, I trow ;
Is this the poultrice for my aking bones ?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

Jul. Here's such a coil,—Come, what says Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift to-day?

Jul. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to friar Laurence' cell,
There stays a husband to make you a wife :
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks,
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.
Hie you to church ; I must another way,
To fetch a ladder, by the which your love
Must climb a bird's nest soon, when it is dark :
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight ;
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
Go, I'll to dinner ; hie you to the cell.

Jul. Hie to high fortune !—honest nurse, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and ROMEO.

Fri. So smile the heavens upon this holy act,
That after-hours with sorrow chide us not !

Rom. Amen, amen ! but come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me in her sight :
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare,
It is enough I may but call her mine.

Fri. These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die ; like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume : The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
And in the taste confounds the appetite :
Therefore, love moderately ; long love doth so ;
Too swift arrives^s as tardy as too slow.

^s *Too swift arrives*—] He that travels too fast is as long before he comes to the end of his journey, as he that travels slow. Precipitation produces mishap.
—JOHNSON.

Enter JULIET.

Here comes the lady;—O, so light a foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint;
A lover may bestride the gossomers^t
That idle in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Jul. Good even to my ghostly confessor.

Fri. Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

Jul. As much to him, else are his thanks too much.

Rom. Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heap'd like mine, and that thy skill be more
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbour air, and let rich musick's tongue
Unfold the imagin'd happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Jul. Conceit,^u more rich in matter than in words,
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament:
They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth.

Fri. Come, come with me, and we will make short work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone,
Till holy church incorporate two in one. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A publick Place.*

Enter MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, Page, and Servants.

Ben. I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire;
The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl;
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.^x

^t——the gossomers—] i.e. The long white filaments which fly in the air in summer.—STEEVENS.

^u Conceit,] i. e. Imagination.

^x For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.] It is observed, that, in Italy, almost all the assassinations are committed during the heat of the summer.—JOHNSON.

Mer. Thou art like one of those fellows, that, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table, and says, *God send me no need of thee!* and, by the operation of the second cup, draws it on the drawer, when, indeed, there is no need.

Ben. Am I like such a fellow?

Mer. Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

Ben. And what to?

Mer. Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou! why thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more, or a hair less, in his beard, than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes; What eye, but such an eye, would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels, as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg, for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another, for tying his new shoes with old ribband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling!

Ben. An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

Mer. The fee-simple? O simple!

Enter TYBALT, and others.

Ben. By my head, here come the Capulets.

Mer. By my heel, I care not.

Tyb. Follow me close, for I will speak to them.—Gentlemen, good den: a word with one of you.

Mer. And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

Tyb. You will find me apt enough to that, sir, if you will give me occasion.

Mer. Could you not take some occasion without giving?

Tyb. Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo,—

Mer. Consort! what dost thou make us minstrels! an thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords: here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

Ben. We talk here in the publick haunt of men:
Either withdraw into some private place,
Or reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

Mer. Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze;
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

Enter ROMEO.

Tyb. Well, peace be with you, sir! here comes my man.

Mer. But I'll be hanged sir, if he wear your livery:
Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower;
Your worship, in that sense, may call him—man.

Tyb. Romeo, the hate I bear thee, can afford
No better term than this—Thou art a villain.

Rom. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting:—Villain am I none;
Therefore farewell; I see thou know'st me not.

Tyb. Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me; therefore turn, and draw.

Rom. I do protest, I never injur'd thee;
But love thee better than thou canst devise,
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love:
And so, good Capulet,—which name I tender
As dearly as mine own,—be satisfied.

Mer. O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!
A la stoccata^y carries it away. [Draws.
Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

Tyb. What would'st thou have with me?

Mer. Good king of cats, nothing, but one of your nine
lives; that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall
use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you

^y *A la stoccata*—] *Stoccata* is the Italian term for a thrust or stab with a rapier.—STEEVENS.

pluck your sword out of his pilcher^z by the ears? make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

Tyb. I am for you. [Drawing.]

Rom. Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

Mer. Come, sir, your passado.^a [They fight.]

Rom. Draw, Benvolio;

Beat down their weapons:—Gentlemen, for shame,

Forbear this outrage;—Tybalt—Mercutio—

The prince expressly hath forbid this bandying

In Verona streets:—hold, Tybalt;—good Mercutio.

[*Exeunt TYBALT and his Partizans.*]

Mer. I am hurt;—

A plague o'both the houses!—I am sped:

Is he gone, and hath nothing?

Ben. What, art thou hurt?

Mer. Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.—
Where is my page?—go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[*Exit Page.*]

Rom. Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world:—A plague o'both your houses!—'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetick!—Why, the devil, came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Rom. I thought all for the best.

Mer. Help me into some house, Benvolio,
Or I shall faint.—A plague o'both your houses!
They have made worm's meat of me:
I have it, and soundly too:—Your houses!

[*Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.*]

Rom. This gentlemen, the prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
In my behalf; my reputation stain'd

^z — pilcher—] Is here used for scabbard. A pilcher was a leathern coat worn by carmen.—NARES.

^a — passado.] i. e. A motion forward, a term in the old art of fencing.—NARES.

With Tybalt's slander, Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my kinsman :—O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel.

Re-enter BENVOLIO.

Ben. O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead ;
That gallant spirit hath aspir'd the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

Rom. This day's black fate on more days doth depend ;^b
This but begins the woe, others must end.

Re-enter TYBALT.

Ben. Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

Rom. Alive ! in triumph ! and Mercutio slain !
Away to heaven, respective lenity,^c
And fire-ey'd fury be my conduct^d now !
Now, Tybalt, take the *villain* back again,
That late thou gav'st me ; for Mercutio's soul
Is but a little way above our heads,
Staying for thine to keep him company ;
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.

Tyb. Thou wretched boy, that didst consort him here,
Shalt with him hence.

Rom. This shall determine that.

[*They fight ; TYBALT falls.*]

Ben. Romeo, away, be gone !
The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain :—
Stand not amaz'd :—the prince will doom thee death,
If thou art taken :—hence !—be gone !—away !

Rom. O ! I am fortune's fool !

Ben. Why dost thou stay ?
[*Exit* ROMEO.]

Enter Citizens, &c.

1 *Cit.* Which way ran he, that kill'd Mercutio ?
Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he !

^b *This day's black fate on more days doth depend ;*] This day's unhappy destiny hangs over the days yet to come. There will yet be more mischief.—JOHNSON.

^c — *respective lenity,*] Cool, considerate gentleness.

^d — *conduct—*] For conductor.

Ben. There lies that Tybalt.

1 Cit. Up, sir, go with me;
I charge thee in the prince's name, obey.

*Enter Prince, attended; MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their
Wives, and Others.*

Prin. Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

Ben. O noble prince, I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl:
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

La. Cap. Tybalt, my cousin!—O my brother's child!
Unhappy sight! ah me, the blood is spill'd
Of my dear kinsman!—Prince, as thou art true,^e
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.—
O cousin, cousin!

Prin. Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

Ben. Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay;
Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice^f the quarrel was, and urg'd withal
Your high displeasure:—All this—uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd,—
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast;
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it: Romeo he cries aloud,
Hold, friends! friends, part! and swifter than his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled:
But by and by comes back to Romeo,

^e — true,] i. e. Just and upright.—JOHNSON.

^f — nice—] i. e. Slight.

Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,
 And to't they go like lightning; for, ere I
 Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain;
 And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly;
 This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

La. Cap. He is a kinsman to the Montague,
 Affection makes him false, he speaks not true:
 Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
 And all those twenty could but kill one life:
 I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give;
 Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

Prin. Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio;
 Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

Mon. Not Romeo, prince, he was Mercutio's friend;
 His fault concludes but, what the law should end,
 The life of Tybalt.

Prin. And, for that offence,
 Immediately we do exile him hence:
 I have an interest in your hates' proceeding,
 My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a bleeding;
 But I'll amerce^s you with so strong a fine,
 That you shall all repent the loss of mine:
 I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;
 Nor tears, nor prayers, shall purchase out abuses,
 Therefore use none: let Romeo hence in haste,
 Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
 Bear hence this body, and attend our will:
 Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
 Towards Phœbus' mansion; such a waggoner
 As Phaeton would whip you to the west,

† — amerce,] i. e. Punish with a fine.

And bring in cloudy night immediately.—
 Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night!
 That run-away's eyes may wink;^h and Romeo
 Leap to these arms, untalk'd of, and unseen!—
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
 By their own beauties: or, if love be blind,
 It best agrees with night.—Come, civilⁱ night,
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,
 Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
 Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks,^k
 With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,
 Think true love acted, simple modesty.
 Come, night!—Come, Romeo! come, thou day in night!
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
 Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.—
 Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night,
 Give me my Romeo: and, when he shall die,
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
 That all the world will be in love with night,
 And pay no worship to the garish^l sun.
 O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
 But not possess'd it; and, though I am sold,
 Not yet enjoyed: So tedious is this day,
 As is the night before some festival
 To an impatient child, that hath new robes,
 And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

Enter Nurse, with Cords.

And she brings news; and every tongue, that speaks

^h *That run-away's eyes may wink;*] i. e. *That the eyes of prying persons, who run-away as soon as observed, may wink, i. e. see imperfectly.*—These eyes have much puzzled the commentators; and I am very distrustful of the correctness of the above interpretation; but I cannot agree with any other that I have met with. The *run-away* has been supposed to refer to the *sun*, to *night*, to *Juliet*, to *Romeo*, and to *Fame*. There is most probably some typographical error in the lines.

ⁱ — *civil*—] i. e. *Grave*.

^k *Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks,*] These are terms of falconry. An *unmanned* hawk is one that is not brought to endure company. *Bating* is fluttering the wings—STEEVENS.

^l — *garish,*] i. e. *Gaudy, showy*.

But Romeo's name, speaks heavenly eloquence.—
Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords,
That Romeo bade thee fetch?

Nurse.

Ay, ay, the cords.

[*Throws them down.*]

Jul. Ah me! what news? why dost thou wring thy hands?

Nurse. Ah well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!
We are undone, lady, we are undone!—

Alack the day!—he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

Jul. Can heaven be so envious?

Nurse.

Romeo can,

Though heaven cannot:—O Romeo, Romeo!

Who ever would have thought it?—Romeo!

Jul. What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? say thou but *I*,^m

And that bare vowel *I* shall poison more

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice:ⁿ

I am not *I*, if there be such an *I*;

Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer, *I*.

If he be slain, say—*I*; or if not, no:

Brief sounds determine of my weal, or woe.

Nurse. I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,—
God save the mark!—here on his manly breast:

A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;

Pale, pale as ashes, all bedawb'd in blood,

All in gore blood;—I swooned at the sight.

Jul. O break, my heart!—poor bankrupt, break at once!

To prison, eyes! ne'er look on liberty!

Vile earth, to earth resign; and motion here;

And thou, and Romeo, press one heavy bier!

Nurse. O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!

^m — say thou but *I*,] In Shakspeare's time the affirmative particle *ay*, was usually written *I*, and here it is necessary to retain the old spelling.—MALONE.

ⁿ — cockatrice:] A *basilisk*, an imaginary creature, supposed to be produced from a cock's egg; a production long thought to be real. It was said to be in form like a serpent, with the head of a cock. Many fables were current respecting it, and it was supposed to have so deadly an eye as to kill by the very look.—NARES.

O courteous Tybalt! honest gentleman!
That ever I should live to see thee dead!

Jul. What storm is this, that blows so contrary?
Is Romeo slaughter'd; and is Tybalt dead?
My dear-lov'd cousin, and my dearer lord?—
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom!
For who is living, if those two are gone?

Nurse. Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;
Romeo, that kill'd him, he is banished.

Jul. O God!—did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

Nurse. It did, it did; alas the day! it did.

Jul. O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
Dove-feather'd raven! wolvis-ravens lamb!
Despised substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned saint, an honourable villain!
O, nature! what hadst thou to do in hell,
When thou did'st bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?—
Was ever book, containing such vile matter,
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!

Nurse. There's no trust,
No faith, no honesty in men; all perjur'd,
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.—
Ah, where's my man? give me some *aqua vitæ*:—
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo!

Jul. Blister'd be thy tongue,
For such a wish! he was not born to shame:
Upon his brow shame is asham'd to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth.
O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

Nurse. Will you speak well of him that kill'd your
cousin?

Jul. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?

Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,^o
 When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?—
 But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?
 That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband:
 Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
 Your tributary drops belong to woe,
 Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.
 My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
 And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:
 All this is comfort; Wherefore weep I then?
 Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,
 That murder'd me: I would forget it fain;
 But, O! it presses to my memory,
 Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds:
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished;
 That—*banished*, that one word—*banished*,
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.^p Tybalt's death,
 Was woe enough, if it had ended there:
 Or,—if sour woe delights in fellowship,
 And needly will be rank'd with other griefs,—
 Why follow'd not, when she said—Tybalt's dead,
 Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
 Which modern lamentation^q might have mov'd?
 But, with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,
Romeo is banished,—to speak that word,
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
 All slain, all dead:—*Romeo is banished*,—
 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
 In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.—
 Where is my father, and my mother, nurse?

Nurse. Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse:
 Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

Jul. Wash they his wounds with tears? mine shall
 be spent,
 When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.

^o — *what tongue shall smooth thy name,*] To smooth, in ancient language is to stroke, to caress, to fondle.—STEEVENS.

^p *Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.*] That is, is worse than the loss of ten thousand Tybalts.—M. MASON.

^q — *modern lamentation*—] i. e. Moderate lamentation. Shakspeare uses the word *modern* for common, slight, and moderate; "with which," says Johnson, "it was, I believe, in his time confounded."

Take up those cords :—Poor ropes, you are beguil'd,
Both you and I ; for Romeo is exil'd :
He made you for a highway to my bed ;
But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.
Come, cords ; come, nurse ; I'll to my wedding bed ;
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead !

Nurse. Hie to your chamber : I'll find Romeo
To comfort you :—I wot well where he is.
Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night ;
I'll to him ; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

Jul. O find him ! give this ring to my true knight,
And bid him come to take his last farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and ROMEO.

Fri. Romeo, come forth ; come forth, thou fearful man ;
Affliction is enamour'd of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity.

Rom. Father, what news ? what is the prince's doom ?
What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,
That I yet know not ?

Fri. Too familiar
Is my dear son with such sour company :
I bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.

Rom. What less than dooms-day is the prince's doom ?

Fri. A gentler judgment vanish'd from his lips,
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

Rom. Ha ! banishment ? be merciful, say—death :
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death : do not say—banishment.

Fri. Hence from Verona art thou banished :
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Rom. There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence-banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death ;—then banishment

Is death mis-term'd : calling death—banishment,
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me. *

Fri. O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind prince,
Taking thy part, hath rush'd aside the law,
And turn'd that black word death to banishment :
This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.

Rom. 'Tis torture, and not mercy : heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives ; and every cat, and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not.—More validity,^r
More honourable state, more courtship^s lives
In carrion flies, than Romeo : they may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,
And steal immortal blessing from her lips ;
Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin ;
But Romeo may not ; he is banished :
Flies may do this, when I from this must fly ;
They are free men, but I am banished.
And say'st thou yet, that exile is not death ?
Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
But—banished—to kill me ; banished ?
O friar, the damned use that word in hell ;
Howlings attend it : How hast thou the heart,
Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
A sin-absolver, and my friend profess'd,
To mangle me with that word—banishment ?

Fri. Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

Rom. O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

Fri. I'll give thee armour to keep off that word ;
Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

Rom. Yet banished ?—Hang up philosophy !
Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,

^r — validity,] i. e. Worth or dignity.—JOHNSON.

^s — more courtship—] i. e. More liberty of approaching her he loves.

Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom ;
It helps not, it prevails not, talk no more.

Fri. O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

Rom. How should they, when that wise men have no eyes ?

Fri. Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.^t

Rom. Thou canst not speak of what thou dost not feel :
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then might'st thou speak, then might'st thou tear thy hair,

And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

Fri. Arise ; one knocks ; good Romeo, hide thyself.
[*Knocking within.*

Rom. Not I ; unless the breath of heart-sick groans,
Mist-like, infold me from the search of eyes. [*Knocking.*

Fri. Hark, how they knock !—Who's there ?—Romeo,
arise ;
Thou wilt be taken :—Stay a while :—stand up ;
[*Knocking.*

Run to my study :—By and by :—God's will !
What wilfulness is this ?—I come, I come. [*Knocking.*
Who knocks so hard ? whence come you ? what's your will ?

Nurse. [*within.*] Let me come in, and you shall know
my errand ;
I come from lady Juliet.

Fri. Welcome then.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,
Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo ?

Fri. There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

Nurse. O, he is even in my mistress' case,
Just in her case !

^t Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.] i. e. Talk over thy affairs.—
STEEVENS.

Fri. O woeful sympathy !
Piteous predicament !

Nurse. Even so lies she,
Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering :—
Stand up, stand up ; stand, an you be a man :
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand ;
Why should you fall into so deep an O ?

Rom. Nurse !

Nurse. Ah sir ! ah sir !—Well, death's the end of all.

Rom. Spak'st thou of Juliet ? how is it with her ?
Doth she not think me an old murderer,
Now I have stain'd the childhood of our joy
With blood remov'd but little from her own ?
Where is she ? and how doth she ? and what says
My conceal'd lady to our cancell'd love ?

Nurse. O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps ;
And now falls on her bed ; and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls ; and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

Rom. As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her ; as that name's cursed hand
Murder'd her kinsman.—O tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge ? tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion. [*Drawing his Sword.*]

Fri. Hold thy desperate hand :
Art thou a man ? thy form cries out, thou art ;
Thy tears are womanish ; thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast :
Unseemly woman, in a seeming man !
Or ill-beseeming beast, in seeming both !
Thou hast amaz'd me : by my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better temper'd.
Hast thou slain Tybalt ? wilt thou slay thyself ?
And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,
By doing damned hate upon thyself ?
Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth ?
Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
In thee at once ; which thou at once would'st lose.

Fye, fye! thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy wit;
 Which, like an usurer, abound'st in all,
 And usest none in that true use indeed
 Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
 Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
 Digressing from the valour of a man :
 Thy dear love, sworn, but hollow perjury,
 Killing that love which thou hast vow'd to cherish :
 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
 Mis-shapen in the conduct of them both,
 Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask,^u
 Is set on fire by thine own ignorance,
 And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.^x
 What, rouse thee, man ! thy Juliet is alive,
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead ;
 There art thou happy : Tybalt would kill thee,
 But thou slew'st Tybalt ; there art thou happy too :
 The law, that threaten'd death, becomes thy friend,
 And turns it to exile ; there art thou happy :
 A pack of blessings lights upon thy back ;
 Happiness courts thee in her best array ;
 But, like a mis-behav'd and sullen wench,
 Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love :
 Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
 Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
 Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her ;
 But, look, thou stay not till the watch be set,
 For then thou canst not pass to Mantua ;
 Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
 To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
 Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
 With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
 Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.—
 Go before, nurse : commend me to thy lady ;

^u *Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask, &c.]* To understand the force of this allusion, it should be remembered that the ancient English soldiers, using *match-locks*, instead of locks with flints as at present, were obliged to carry a lighted *match* hanging at their belts, very near to the wooden *flask* in which they kept their powder.—STEEVENS.

^x *And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.]* And thou torn to pieces with thine own weapons.—JOHNSON.

And bid her hasten all the house to bed,
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto :
Romeo is coming.

Nurse. O Lord, I could have staid here all the night,
To hear good counsel : O, what learning is !
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

Rom. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

Nurse. Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir :
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

[*Exit Nurse.*

Rom. How well my comfort is reviv'd by this !

Fri. Go hence : Good night ; and here stands all
your state ;^y

Either be gone before the watch be set,
Or by the break of day disguis'd from hence :
Sojourn in Mantua ; I'll find out your man,
And he shall signify from time to time
Every good hap to you, that chances here :
Give me thy hand ; 'tis late : farewell ; good night.

Rom. But that a joy past joy calls out on me,
It were a grief, so brief to part with thee :
Farewell.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, and PARIS.

Cap. Things have fallen out, sir, so unluckily,
That we have had no time to move our daughter :
Look you, she lov'd her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I ;—Well ; we were born to die.—
'Tis very late, she'll not come down to-night :
I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been a-bed an hour ago.

Par. These times of woe afford no time to woo :
Madam, good night : commend me to your daughter.

^y — here stands all your state ;] The whole of your fortune depends on this.—JOHNSON.

La. Cap. I will, and know her mind early to-morrow ;
To-night she's mew'd up² to her heaviness.

Cap. Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender^a
Of my child's love : I think, she will be rul'd
In all respects by me ; nay more, I doubt it not.
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed ;
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love ;
And bid her, mark you me, on Wednesday next—
But, soft ; What day is this ?

Par. Monday, my lord.

Cap. Monday ? ha ! ha ! Well, Wednesday is too soon,
O' Thursday let it be :—o' Thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl :—
Will you be ready ? do you like this haste ?
We'll keep no great ado :—a friend, or two :—
For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly,
Being our kinsman, if we revel much :
Therefore we'll have some half-a-dozen friends,
And there an end. But what say you to Thursday ?

Par. My lord, I would that Thursday were to-morrow.

Cap. Well, get you gone :—O' Thursday be it then :—
Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding-day.—
Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho !
Afore me, it is so very late, that we
May call it early by and by :—Good night. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

Juliet's Chamber.

Enter ROMEO and JULIET.

Jul. Wilt thou be gone ? it is not yet near day :
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear ;

² — mew'd up—] This is a phrase from falconry. A mew was a place of confinement for hawks.—STEEVENS.

^a *Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender—*] Desperate means only bold, adventurous, as if he had said in the vulgar phrase, *I will speak a bold word, and venture to promise you my daughter.*—JOHNSON.

Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree :
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Rom. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale : look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east :
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops ;
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Jul. Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I :
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua :
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

Rom. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death ;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say, yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex^b of Cynthia's brow ;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads :
I have more care^c to stay than will to go ;—
Come death, and welcome ! Juliet wills it so.—
How is't, my soul ? let's talk, it is not day.

Jul. It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away ;
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords, and displeasing sharps.
Some say, the lark makes sweet division ;^d
This doth not so, for she divideth us :
Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes ;^e
O, now I would they had changed voices too !
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,

^b — the pale reflex—] The appearance of a cloud opposed to the moon.—
JOHNSON.

^c — care—] For inclination.

^d — sweet division ;] *Division* seems to have been the technical phrase for the pauses or parts of a musical composition.—STEEVENS.

^e *Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes ;*] This tradition of the toad and lark I have heard expressed in a rustick rhyme :

“ To heaven I'd fly,
But that the toad beguil'd me of mine eye.”

The sense is this : *The lark, they say, has lent her eyes to the toad, and now I would the toad had her voice too, since she uses it to the disturbance of lovers.*—
JOHNSON. For *change* read *changed*.—M. MASON.

Hunting thee hence with hunts-up to the day.^f

O, now be gone ; more light and light it grows.

Rom. More light and light ?—more dark and dark our woes.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam !

Jul. Nurse ?

Nurse. Your lady mother's coming to your chamber :
The day is broke ; be wary, look about. [*Exit Nurse.*]

Jul. Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

Rom. Farewell, farewell ! one kiss, and I'll descend.
[*ROMEO descends.*]

Jul. Art thou gone so ? my love ! my lord ! my friend !
I must hear from thee every day i'the hour,
For in a minute there are many days :
O ! by this count I shall be much in years,
Ere I again behold my Romeo.

Rom. Farewell ! I will omit no opportunity
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

Jul. O, think'st thou, we shall ever meet again ?

Rom. I doubt it not ; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

Jul. O God ! I have an ill-divining soul ;
Methinks, I see thee, now thou art below,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb :
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Rom. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you :
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu ! adieu !

[*Exit ROMEO.*]

Jul. O fortune, fortune ! all men call thee fickle :
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him
That is renown'd for faith ? Be fickle, fortune ;
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

La. Cap. [*within.*] Ho, daughter ! are you up ?

Jul. Who i'st that calls ? is it my lady mother ?

^f *Hunting thee hence with hunts-up to the day.* The *hunts-up* was the name of the tune anciently played to wake the hunters, and collect them together.
—STEEVENS.

Is she not down so late, or up so early?
What unaccustom'd cause procures^s her hither?

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. Why, how now, Juliet?

Jul. Madam, I am not well.

La. Cap. Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?
An if thou could'st, thou could'st not make him live;
Therefore, have done: Some grief shows much of love;
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

Jul. Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

La. Cap. So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend
Which you weep for.

Jul. Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

La. Cap. Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his
death,

As that the villain lives which slaughter'd him.

Jul. What villain, madam?

La. Cap. That same villain, Romeo.

Jul. Villain and he are many miles asunder.
God pardon him! I do, with all my heart;
And yet no man, like he, doth grieve my heart.

La. Cap. That is, because the traitor murderer lives.

Jul. Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands.
'Would, none but I might venge my cousin's death!

La. Cap. We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not:
Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,—
Where that same banish'd runagate doth live,—
That shall bestow on him so sure a draught,
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company:
And then, I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

Jul. Indeed, I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, till I behold him—dead—
Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vex'd:—
Madam, if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper it;

^s — procures—] i. e. Brings.

That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
 Soon sleep in quiet—O, how my heart abhors
 To hear him nam'd,—and cannot come to him,—
 To wreak the love I bore my cousin Tybalt
 Upon his body that hath slaughter'd him!

La. Cap. Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.
 But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

Jul. And joy comes well in such a needful time:
 What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

La. Cap. Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;
 One, who, to put thee from thy heaviness,
 Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy,
 That thou expect'st not, nor I look'd not for.

Jul. Madam, in happy time,^h what day is that?

La. Cap. Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn,
 The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
 The county Paris,ⁱ at St. Peter's church,
 Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

Jul. Now, by St. Peter's church, and Peter too,
 He shall not make me there a joyful bride.
 I wonder at this haste; that I must wed
 Ere he, that should be husband, comes to woo.
 I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,
 I will not marry yet; and, when I do, I swear,
 It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
 Rather than Paris:—These are news indeed!

La. Cap. Here comes your father; tell him so yourself,
 And see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter CAPULET and Nurse.

Cap. When the sun sets, the air doth drizzle dew;
 But for the sunset of my brother's son,
 It rains downright.—

^h — in happy time,] *A la bonne heure.* This phrase was interjected, when the hearer was not quite so well pleased as the speaker.—JOHNSON.

ⁱ *The county Paris,*] Paris, though in one place called *earl*, is most commonly stiled the *countie* in this play. Shakspeare seems to have preferred, for some reason or other, the *Italian comte* to our *count*: perhaps he took it from the old English novel, from which he is said to have taken his plot: and in which Paris is first stiled a *young earle*, and afterwards *counte*, *countee*, *county*; according to the unsettled orthography of the time.—FARMER.

How now? a conduit,^k girl? what, still in tears?
 Evermore showering? In one little body
 Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind:
 For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
 Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
 Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs;
 Who,—raging with thy tears, and they with them,—
 Without a sudden calm, will overset
 Thy tempest-tossed body.—How now, wife?
 Have you deliver'd to her our decree?

La. Cap. Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.

I would, the fool were married to her grave!

Cap. Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife.
 How! will she none? doth she not give us thanks?
 Is she not proud? doth she not count her bless'd,
 Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
 So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

Jul. Not proud, you have; but thankful, that you have:
 Proud can I never be of what I hate;
 But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.

Cap. How now! how now, choplogick! What is this?
 Proud,—and, I thank you,—and, I thank you not;—
 And yet not proud;—Mistress minion, you,
 Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,
 But settle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
 To go with Paris to Saint Peter's church,
 Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
 Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!
 You tallow face.^l

La. Cap. Fye, fye! what are you mad?

Jul. Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
 Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

^k — a conduit,] Conduits, in the form of human figures, it has been already observed, were common in Shakspeare's time.—MALONE.

^l Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!

You tallow face.] Such was the indelicacy of the age of Shakspeare, that authors were not contented only to employ these terms of abuse in their own original performances, but even felt no reluctance to introduce them in their versions of the most chaste and elegant of the Greek and Roman poets. Stanyhurst, the translator of Virgil, in 1582, makes Dido call Æneas *hedgibrat*, *cullion* and *tar-breech*, in the course of one speech.—STEEVENS.

Cap. Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!
 I tell thee what,—get thee to church o’Thursday,
 Or never after look me in the face:
 Speak not, reply not, do not answer me;
 My fingers itch.—Wife, we scarce thought us bless’d,
 That God had sent us but this only child;
 But now I see this one is one too much,
 And that we have a curse in having her;
 Out on her, hilding!^m

Nurse. God in heaven bless her!
 You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

Cap. And why, my lady wisdom? hold your tongue,
 Good prudence; smatter with your gossips, go.

Nurse. I speak no treason.

Cap. O, God ye good den!

Nurse. May not one speak?

Cap. Peace, you mumbling fool!
 Utter your gravity o’er a gossip’s bowl,
 For here we need it not.

La. Cap. You are too hot.

Cap. God’s bread! it makes me mad: Day, night, late,
 early,

At home, abroad, alone, in company,
 Waking, or sleeping, still my care hath been
 To have her match’d: and having now provided
 A gentleman of princely parentage,
 Of fair dimesnes, youthful, and nobly train’d,
 Stuff’d (as they say) with honourable parts,
 Proportion’d as one’s heart could wish a man,—
 And then to have a wretched puling fool,
 A whining mammet, in her fortune’s tender,
 To answer—*I’ll not wed—I cannot love,
 I am too young,—I pray you, pardon me;—*
 But, an you will not wed, I’ll pardon you:
 Graze where you will, you shall not house with me;
 Look to’t, think on’t, I do not use to jest.
 Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:
 An you be mine, I’ll give you to my friend;

^m — hilding!] i. e. A base, low, menial wretch; derived by some from *hind-
 cing*, a Devonshire word signifying *degenerate*.—NARES.

An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die i'the streets,
 For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
 Nor what is mine shall never do thee good :
 Trust to't, bethink you, I'll not be forsworn. [Exit.

Jul. Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
 That sees into the bottom of my grief?
 O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!
 Delay this marriage for a month, a week;
 Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
 In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

La. Cap. Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word;
 Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee. [Exit.

Jul. O God!—O nurse! how shall this be prevented?
 My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven;
 How shall that faith return again to earth,
 Unless that husband send it me from heaven
 By leaving earth?—Comfort me, counsel me.—
 Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
 Upon so soft a subject as myself!—
 What say'st thou? hast thou not a word of joy?
 Some comfort, nurse.

Nurse. 'Faith, here 'tis: Romeo
 Is banished; and all the world to nothing,
 That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;
 Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.
 Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,
 I think it best you married with the county.ⁿ
 O, he's a lovely gentleman!
 Romeo's a dishclout to him; an eagle, madam,
 Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye,
 As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
 I think you are happy in this second match,
 For it excels your first: or if it did not,
 Your first is dead; or 'twere as good he were,
 As living here and you no use of him.

Jul. Speakest thou from thy heart?

ⁿ *I think it best you married with the county.*] The character of the nurse exhibits a just picture of those whose actions have no principles for their foundation. She has been unfaithful to the trust reposed in her by Capulet, and is ready to embrace any expedient that offers, to avert the consequences of her first infidelity.—STEEVENS.

Nurse. From my soul too;
Or else beshrew them both.

Jul. Amen!

Nurse. To what?

Jul. Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.
Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,
To make confession, and to be absolv'd.

Nurse. Marry, I will; and this is wisely done. [*Exit.*]

Jul. Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!
Is it more sin—to wish me thus forsworn,
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
Which she hath prais'd him with above compare
So many thousand times?—Go, counsellor;
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.—
I'll to the friar, to know his remedy;
If all else fail, myself have power to die. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Friar Laurence's Cell.*

Enter Friar LAURENCE *and* PARIS.

Fri. On Thursday, sir? the time is very short.

Par. My father Capulet will have it so;
And I am nothing slow, to slack his haste.^o

Fri. You say, you do not know the lady's mind;
Uneven is the course, I like it not.

Par. Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talk'd of love;
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous,
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway;
And, in his wisdom, hastes our marriage,
To stop the inundation of her tears;
Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society;
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

^o And I am nothing slow, &c.] His haste shall not be abated by my slowness.—
JOHNSON.

Fri. I would I knew not why it should be slow'd.

[*Aside.*

Look, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

Enter JULIET.

Par. Happily met, my lady, and my wife!

Jul. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

Par. That may be, must be, love, on Thursday next.

Jul. What must be, shall be.

Fri. That's a certain text.

Par. Come you to make confession to this father?

Jul. To answer that, were to confess to you.

Par. Do not deny to him, that you love me.

Jul. I will confess to you, that I love him.

Par. So will you, I am sure, that you love me.

Jul. If I do so, it will be of more price,

Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

Par. Poor soul, thy face is much abus'd with tears.

Jul. The tears have got small victory by that;

For it was bad enough, before their spite.

Par. Thou wrong'st it, more than tears, with that report.

Jul. That is no slander, sir, that is a truth;

And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

Par. Thy face is mine, and thou hast slander'd it.

Jul. It may be so, for it is not mine own.—

Are you at leisure, holy father, now;

Or shall I come to you at evening mass?^p

Fri. My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now :—
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

Par. God shield, I should disturb devotion!—

Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse you :

Till then, adieu! and keep this holy kiss.

[*Exit PARIS.*

Jul. O, shut the door! and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me: Past hope, past cure, past help!

Fri. Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;

^p Or shall I come to you at evening mass? Juliet means *vespers*. There is no such thing as *evening mass*. "Masses (as Tynes Moryson observes) are only sung in the morning and when the priests are fasting."—RITSON.

It strains me past the compass of my wits :
 I hear thou must, and nothing must prorogue it,
 On Thursday next be married to this county.

Jul. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
 Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it :
 If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,
 Do thou but call my resolution wise,
 And with this knife I'll help it presently.
 God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands ;
 And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd,
 Shall be the label to another deed,^q
 Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
 Turn to another, this shall slay them both :
 Therefore, out of thy long-experienc'd time,
 Give me some present counsel ; or, behold,
 'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
 Shall play the umpire ;^r arbitrating that
 Which the commission of thy years and art^s
 Could to no issue of true honour bring.
 Be not so long to speak ; I long to die,
 If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

Fri. Hold daughter ; I do spy a kind of hope,
 Which craves as desperate an execution
 As that is desperate which we would prevent.
 If, rather than to marry county Paris,
 Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself ;
 Then is it likely, thou wilt undertake
 A thing like death to chide away this shame,
 That cop'st with death himself to scape from it ;
 And, if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Jul. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
 From off the battlements of yonder tower ;

^q *Shall be the label to another deed,*] The seals of deeds in our author's time were not impressed on the parchment itself on which the deed was written; but were appended on distinct slips or labels affixed to the deed.—MALONE.

^r ——— *this bloody knife*

Shall play the umpire ;] i. e. *Shall decide the struggle between me and my distresses.*—"Daggers, or as they were more commonly called, knives, were worn at all times by every woman in England ; whether they were so in Italy, Shakespeare, I believe, never enquired, and I cannot tell. In the haft of this universal appendage (for men also wore them) there was of course much variety."—GIFFORD'S *Ben Jonson*, vol. v. 221.

^s ——— *commission—*] i. e. *Authority or power.*—JOHNSON.

Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears;
Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house,
O'er-cover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks, and yellow chapless skulls;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud;
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble;
And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

Fri. Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris: Wednesday is to-morrow;
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone,
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber:
Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off:
When, presently, through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humour, which shall seize
Each vital spirit; for no pulse shall keep
His natural progress, but surcease to beat:
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To paly ashes; thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death, when he shuts up the day of life;
Each part, depriv'd of supple government,
Shall stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death:
And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt remain full two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:
Then (as the manner of our country is,)
In thy best robes uncover'd on the bier,
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault,
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;
And hither shall he come; and he and I
Will watch thy waking, and that very night
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.

And this shall free thee from this present shame;
 If no unconstant toy,^t nor womanish fear,
 Abate thy valour in the acting it.

Jul. Give me, O give me! tell me not of fear.

Fri. Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous
 In this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed
 To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

Jul. Love, give me strength! and strength shall help
 afford.

Farewell, dear father!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, Nurse, and Servant.

Cap. So many guests invite as here are writ.—

[*Exit* Servant.]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

2 Serv. You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if they
 can lick their fingers.

Cap. How canst thou try them so?

2 Serv. Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his
 own fingers:^u therefore he, that cannot lick his fingers,
 goes not with me.

Cap. Go, begone.—

[*Exit* Servant.]

We shall be much unfurnish'd for this time.—

What, is my daughter gone to friar Laurence?

Nurse. Ay, forsooth.

Cap. Well, he may chance to do some good on her:
 A peevish self-will'd harlotry it is.

Enter JULIET.

Nurse. See, where she comes from shrift^x with merry
 look.

^t *If no unconstant toy, &c.] If no fickle freak, no light caprice, no change of fancy, hinder the performance.—JOHNSON.*

^u *— lick his own fingers:] I find this adage in Pultenham's Arte of English Poesie, 1589, p. 157.*

As the olde cocke crowes so doeth the chick:

A bad cooke that cannot his owne fingers lick."—STEEVENS.

^x *— from shrift—] i. e. From confession.*

Cap. How now, my headstrong? where have you been gadding?^y

Jul. Where I have learn'd me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition
To you, and your behests; and am enjoin'd
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,
And beg your pardon:—Pardon, I beseech you!
Henceforward I am ever rul'd by you.

Cap. Send for the county; go tell him of this;
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.

Jul. I met the youthful lord at Laurence's cell;
And gave him what becomed^z love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

Cap. Why, I am glad on't; this is well,—stand up:
This is as't should be.—Let me see the county;
Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.—
Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him.

Jul. Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,
To help me sort such needful ornaments
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow?

La. Cap. No, not till Thursday; there is time enough.

Cap. Go, nurse, go with her:—we'll to church to-morrow. [*Exeunt JULIET and Nurse.*]

La. Cap. We shall be short in our provision;
'Tis now near night.

Cap. Tush! I will stir about,
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife:
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her;
I'll not to bed to-night;—let me alone;
I'll play the housewife for this once.—What, ho!—
They are all forth: Well, I will walk myself
To county Paris, to prepare him up
Against to-morrow: my heart is wond'rous light,
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaim'd. [*Exeunt.*]

^y — *gadding*?] The primitive sense of this word was to straggle from house to house, and collect money, under pretence of singing carols to the Blessed Virgin.—STEEVENS.

^z — *becomed*—] For *becoming*: one participle for the other; a frequent practice with our author.—STEEVENS.

SCENE III.

*Juliet's Chamber.**Enter JULIET and Nurse.*

Jul. Ay, those attires are best :—But, gentle nurse,
I pray thee, leave me to myself to-night;
For I have need of many orisons
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. What, are you busy? do you need my help?

Jul. No, madam; we have cull'd such necessities
As are behoveful for our state to-morrow :
So please you, let me now be left alone,
And let the nurse this night sit up with you;
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,
In this so sudden business.

La. Cap. Good night!
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

[Exeunt Lady CAPULET and Nurse.]

Jul. Farewell!—God knows, when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life :
I'll call them back again to comfort me ;—
Nurse!—What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.—
Come, phial.—
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Must I of force be married to the county?—
No, no ;—this shall forbid it :—lie thou there.—

[Laying down a Dagger.]

What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead ;
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear, it is : and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man :

I will not entertain so bad a thought.—
 How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
 I wake before the time that Romeo
 Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!
 Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
 Or, if I live, is it not very like,
 The horrible conceit of death and night,
 Together with the terror of the place,—
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
 Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
 Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd;
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,^z
 Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,
 At some hours in the night spirits resort;—
 Alack, alack! is it not like, that I,^a
 So early waking,—what with loathsome smells;
 And shrieks like mandrakes, torn out of the earth,
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad;—
 O! if I wake, shall I not be distraught,^b
 Environed with all these hideous fears?
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints?
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
 As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
 O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
 Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
 Upon a rapier's point:—Stay, Tybalt, stay!—
 Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

[She throws herself on the Bed.]

^z — *green in earth,*] i. e. Fresh in earth, newly buried.—STEEVENS.

^a — *is it not like, that I,*] This speech is confused, and inconsequential, according to the disorder of Juliet's mind.—JOHNSON.

^b — *distraught,*] i. e. Distracted.

SCENE IV.

Capulet's Hall.

Enter Lady CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Hold, take these keys, and fetch more spices, nurse.

Nurse. They call for dates and quinces in the pasty.^c

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath crow'd,
The curfew bell^d hath rung, 'tis three o'clock :—
Look to the bak'd meats, good Angelica :
Spare not for cost.

Nurse. Go, go, you cot-quean,^e go,
Get you to bed ; 'faith, you'll be sick to-morrow
For this night's watching.

Cap. No, not a whit ; What ! I have watch'd ere now
All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

La. Cap. Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your
But I will watch you from such watching now. [time ;^f

[*Exeunt Lady CAPULET and Nurse.*

Cap. A jealous-hood, a jealous-hood !—Now, fellow,
What's there ?

^c — *pastry.*] i. e. The room where paste was made. So *laundry, spicery,* &c.—MALONE.

^d *The curfew bell*—] In its original signification the evening bell: *couvre feu*. The original time for ringing it was eight in the evening, and we are told by some writers that in many villages the name is still retained for the evening bell. From this passage it seems that the bell, which was commonly rung for that purpose, obtained in time the name of *the curfew bell*, and was so called whenever it rung on any occasion. It is a mere vulgar error that the institution was a badge of slavery imposed by the Norman Conqueror. To *put out the fire* became necessary only because it was time to go to bed: And if the *curfew* commanded all fires to be extinguished, the morning bell commanded them to be lighted again. In short, the ringing of those two bells was a manifest and essential service to people who had scarcely any other means of measuring their time.—NARES and RITSON.

^e — *cot-quean,*] i. e. A man that troubles himself with women's affairs ; probably *cock-quean*.—NARES.

^f — *a mouse-hunt in your time ;*] In Norfolk, and many other parts of England, the cant term for a weasel is—a *mouse-hunt*. The intrigues of this animal, like those of the cat kind, are usually carried on during the night. This circumstance will account for the appellation which Lady Capulet allows her husband to have *formerly* deserved.—STEEVENS.

Enter Servants, with Spits, Logs, and Baskets.

1 *Serv.* Things for the cook, sir ; but I know not what.

Cap. Make haste, make haste. [*Exit* 1 *Serv.*]*—*Sirrah, fetch drier logs ;

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

2 *Ser.* I have a head, sir, that will find out logs, And never trouble Peter for the matter. [*Exit.*

Cap. 'Mass, and well said ; A merry whoreson ! ha, Thou shalt be logger-head.—Good faith, 'tis day : The county will be here with musick straight, [*Musick within.*

For so he said he would. I hear him near :—

Nurse !—Wife !—what, ho !—what, nurse, I say !

Enter Nurse.

Go, waken Juliet, go, and trim her up ;

I'll go and chat with Paris :—Hie, make haste,

Make haste ! the bridegroom he is come already :

Make haste, I say ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Juliet's Chamber ; JULIET on the Bed.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Mistress !—what, mistress !—Juliet !—fast, I warrant her, she :—

Why, lamb !—why lady !—fye, you slug-a-bed !—

Why, love, I say !—Madam ! sweet-heart !—why, bride !—

What, not a word ?—you take your pennyworths now ;

Sleep for a week ; for the next night, I warrant,

The county Paris hath set up his rest,

That you shall rest but little.—God forgive me,

(Marry, and amen !) how sound is she asleep !

I needs must wake her :—Madam, madam, madam !

Ay, let the county take you in your bed ;

He'll fright you up, i'faith.—Will it not be ?

What, drest ! and in your clothes ! and down again !

I must needs wake you :—Lady ! lady ! lady !

Alas ! alas !—Help ! help ! my lady's dead !—
 O, well-a-day, that ever I was born !—
 Some aqua-vitæ, ho !—my lord ! my lady !

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. What noise is here ?

Nurse. O lamentable day !

La. Cap. What is the matter ?

Nurse. Look, look ! O heavy day !

La. Cap. O me, O me !—my child, my only life,
 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee !—
 Help, help !—call help.

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. For shame, bring Juliet forth ; her lord is come.

Nurse. She's dead, deceas'd, she's dead ; alack the day !

La. Cap. Alack the day ! she's dead, she's dead, she's
 dead.

Cap. Ha ! let me see her :—Out, alas ! she's cold ;
 Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff ;
 Life and these lips have long been separated :
 Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
 Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.
 Accursed time ! unfortunate old man !

Nurse. O lamentable day !

La. Cap. O woful time !

Cap. Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,
 Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and PARIS, with Musicians.

Fri. Come, is the bride ready to go to church ?

Cap. Ready to go, but never to return :

O son, the night before thy wedding day
 Hath death lain with thy bride :—See, there she lies.
 Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
 Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir ;
 My daughter he hath wedded ! I will die,
 And leave him all ; life leaving, all is death's.

Par. Have I thought long to see this morning's face,
 And doth it give me such a sight as this ?

La. Cap. Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
Most miserable hour, that e'er time saw
In lasting labour of his pilgrimage!
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight.

Nurse. O woe! O woful, woful, woful day!
Most lamentable day! most woful day,
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!
Never was seen so black a day as this:
O woful day, O woful day!

Par. Beguil'd, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
Most détestable death, by thee beguil'd,
By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown!—
O love! O life!—not life, but love in death!

Cap. Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd!—
Uncomfortable time! why cam'st thou now
To murder murder our solemnity?
O child! O child!—my soul, and not my child!—
Dead art thou, dead! alack! my child is dead;
And, with my child, my joys are buried!

Fri. Peace, ho, for shame! confusion's cure lives not
In these confusions. Heaven and yourself
Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all,
And all the better is it for the maid:
Your part in her you could not keep from death;
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was—her promotion;
For 'twas your heaven, she should be advanc'd:
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanc'd,
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
O, in this love, you love your child so ill,
That you run mad, seeing that she is well:
She's not well married, that lives married long;
But she's best married, that dies married young.
Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to church:

For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

Cap. All things, that we ordained festival,
Turn from their office to black funeral:
Our instruments, to melancholy bells;
Our wedding cheer, to a sad burial feast;
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,
And all things change them to the contrary.

Fri. Sir, go you in,—and, madam, go with him;—
And go, sir Paris;—every one prepare
To follow this fair corse unto her grave:
The heavens do low'r upon you, for some ill;
Move them no more, by crossing their high will.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, PARIS,
and Friar.

1 *Mus.* 'Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be gone.

Nurse. Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up;
For, well you know, this is a pitiful case. [*Exit Nurse.*

1 *Mus.* Ay, by my troth, the case may be amended.

Enter PETER.^s

Pet. Musicians, O, musicians, *Heart's ease, heart's ease*;
O, an you will have me live, play—*heart's ease*.

1 *Mus.* Why *heart's ease*?

Pet. O, musicians, because my heart itself plays—*My heart is full of woe*:^h O, play me some merry dump,ⁱ to comfort me.

2 *Mus.* Not a dump we; 'tis no time to play now.

Pet. You will not then?

Mus. No.

Pet. I will then give it you soundly.

1 *Mus.* What will you give us?

^s — *Peter.*] From the quarto of 1599, it appears that the part of Peter was originally performed by William Kempe.—MALONE.

^h — *My heart is full of woe.*] This is the burthen of the first stanza of A pleasant New Ballad of Two Lovers:

“Hey hoe! my heart is full of woe.”—STEEVENS.

— *a merry dump.*] This is evidently a purposed absurdity suited to the character of the speaker: a *dump* was formerly the received term for a melancholy strain in music, vocal or instrumental.—NARES.

Pet. No money, on my faith ; but the gleeck : I will give you the minstrel.^k

1 *Mus.* Then will I give you the serving-creature.

Pet. Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on your pate. I will carry no crotchets : I'll *re* you, I'll *fa* you ; Do you note me ?

1 *Mus.* An you *re* us, and *fa* us, you note us.

2 *Mus.* Pray you, put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

Pet. Then have at you with my wit ; I will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger :—Answer me like men :

*When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then musick, with her silver sound ;——*

Why, *silver sound* ? why, *musick with her silver sound* ?
What say you, Simon Catling ?^l

1 *Mus.* Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Pet. Pretty ! What say you, Hugh Rebeck ?^m

2 *Mus.* I say—*silver sound*, because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pretty too ! What say you, James Soundpost ?

3 *Mus.* 'Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. O, I cry you mercy ! you are the singer : I will say for you. It is—*musick with her silver sound*, because such fellows as you have seldom gold for sounding :—

*Then musick with her silver sound,
With speedy help doth lend redress.*

[*Exit, singing.*

1 *Mus.* What a pestilent knave is this same ?

2 *Mus.* Hang him, Jack ! Come, we'll in here ; tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner. [*Exeunt.*

^k No money, on my faith ; but the gleeck : I will give you the minstrel.] To give the gleeck meant to pass a jest upon a person, to make him appear ridiculous. —To give the minstrel only means, " I will call you minstrel and so treat you," to which the musician replies, " Then I will give you the serving creature," as a personal retort in kind.—NARES.

^l —— Catling?] A catling was a small lute-string made of catgut.—STEEVENS.

^m —— Hugh Rebeck?] The fiddler is so called from an instrument with three strings, which is mentioned by several of the old writers. *Rebec, rebecquin.*—STEEVENS.

ACT V.ⁿSCENE I.—Mantua. *A Street.**Enter* ROMEO.

Rom. If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,^o
 My dreams presage some joyful news at hand :
 My bosom's lord^p sits lightly in his throne ;
 And, all this day, an unaccustom'd spirit
 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
 I dreamt my lady came and found me dead ;
 (Strange dream ! that gives a dead man leave to think,)
 And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips,
 That I reviv'd, and was an emperor.
 Ah me ! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
 When but love's shadows are so rich in joy ?

Enter BALTHASAR.

News from Verona !—How now, Balthasar ?
 Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar ?
 How doth my lady ? Is my father well ?
 How fares my Juliet ? That I ask again ;
 For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

Bal. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill ;
 Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
 And her immortal part with angels lives ;

ⁿ *Act V.]* The acts are here properly enough divided, nor did any better distribution than the editors have already made, occur to me in the perusal of this play ; yet it may not be improper to remark, that in the first folio, and I suppose the foregoing editions are in the same state, there is no division of the acts, and therefore some future editor may try, whether any improvement can be made, by reducing them to a length more equal, or interrupting the action at more proper intervals.—JOHNSON.

^o *If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,*] i. e. If I may trust to what I saw in my sleep.—STEEVENS.

^p *My bosom's lord—*] i. e. *Love.* In King Arthur, a poem, by R. Chester, 1601, the same phrase is used ; and the author in a marginal note declares, that by *bosom's lord*, he means *Cupid*. Romeo means to say that his passion, which has been much disquieted by the unfortunate events that have happened since his marriage, is, in consequence of his last night's dream, gay and cheerful.—STEEVENS and MALONE.

The superstition, that a sudden and causeless gaiety of spirit often preceded the occurrence of a great affliction, was common in this country till very lately. One instance of it may be met with in Johnson's *Life of Roscommon*.

I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it to you :
O pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Rom. Is it even so ? then I defy you, stars !—
Thou know'st my lodging ; get me ink and paper,
And hire post horses ; I will hence to-night.

Bal. Pardon me, sir, I will not leave you thus :
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

Rom. Tush, thou art deceiv'd ;
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do :
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar ?

Bal. No, my good lord.

Rom. No matter : get thee gone,
And hire those horses ; I'll be with thee straight.

[*Exit BALTHASAR.*]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.
Let's see for means :—O, mischief ! thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men !
I do remember an apothecary,—
And hereabouts he dwells,—whom late I noted
In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples ; meager were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones :
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuff'd,¹ and other skins
Of ill-shap'd fishes ; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses,
Were thinly scatter'd to make up a show.
Noting this penury, to myself I said—
An if a man² did need a poison now,
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,

¹ *An alligator stuff'd,*] I was many years ago assured, that formerly, when an apothecary first engaged with his druggist, he was gratuitously furnished by him with these articles of show, which were then imported for that use only.
—STEEVENS.

² *An if a man,* &c.] This phraseology, which means simply—*If*, was not unfrequent in Shakspeare's time and before.—REED.

Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.
 O, this same thought did but fore-run my need;
 And this same needy man must sell it me.
 As I remember, this should be the house:
 Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.—
 What, ho! apothecary!

Enter Apothecary.

Ap. Who calls so loud?

Rom. Come hither, man.—I see, that thou art poor;
 Hold, there is forty ducats: let me have
 A dram of poison; such soon-speeding geer^s
 As will disperse itself through all the veins,
 That the life-weary taker may fall dead;
 And that the trunk may be discharg'd of breath
 As violently, as hasty powder fir'd
 Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

Ap. Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law
 Is death, to any he that utters them.

Rom. Art thou so bare, and full of wretchedness,
 And fear'st to die? famine is in thy cheeks,
 Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
 Upon thy back hangs ragged misery,
 The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law:
 The world affords no law to make thee rich;
 Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

Ap. My poverty, but not my will, consents.

Rom. I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

Ap. Put this in any liquid thing you will,
 And drink it off; and, if you had the strength
 Of twenty men, it would despatch you straight.

Rom. There is thy gold; worse poison to men's souls,
 Doing more murders in this loathsome world,
 Than these poor compounds that thou may'st not sell:
 I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none.
 Farewell; buy food, and get thyself in flesh.—
 Come, cordial, and not poison; go with me
 To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee. [Exeunt.

^s — geer—] i. e. Stuff.—JOHNSON.

SCENE II.

*Friar Laurence's Cell.**Enter Friar JOHN.**John.* Holy Franciscan friar! brother, ho!*Enter Friar LAURENCE.**Lau.* This same should be the voice of friar John.—
Welcome from Mantua: What says Romeo?
Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.*John.* Going to find a bare-foot brother out,
One of our order, to associate me,^t
Here in this city visiting the sick,
And finding him, the searchers of the town,
Suspecting, that we both were in a house
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,
Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth;
So that my speed to Mantua there was stay'd.*Lau.* Who bare my letter then to Romeo?*John.* I could not send it,—here it is again,—
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,
So fearful were they of infection.*Lau.* Unhappy fortune! by my brotherhood,
The letter was not nice,ⁿ but full of charge,
Of dear import: Friar John, go hence;
Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight
Unto my cell.*John.* Brother, I'll go and bring it thee. [Exit.]*Lau.* Now must I to the monument alone;
Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake;
She will beshrew me much, that Romeo
Hath had no notice of these accidents;
But I will write again to Mantua,
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come;
Poor living corse, clos'd in a dead man's tomb! [Exit.]

^t *One of our order, to associate me,*] Each friar has always a companion assigned him by the superior when he asks leave to go out; and thus, says Baretto, they are a check upon each other.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ *— was not nice,*] i.e. Was not written on a trivial or idle subject.—MALONE.

SCENE III.

A Churchyard; in it, a Monument belonging to the Capulets.

Enter PARIS, and his Page, bearing Flowers and a Torch.

Par. Give me thy torch, boy: Hence, and stand
Yet put it out, for I would not be seen. [aloof;—
Under yon yew-trees lay thee all along,
Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground;
So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,
(Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,)
But thou shalt hear it: whistle then to me,
As signal that thou hear'st something approach.
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

Page. I am almost afraid to stand alone
Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure. [*Retires.*

*Par.** Sweet flower, with flowers I strew thy bridal bed:
Sweet tomb, that in thy circuit dost contain
The perfect model of eternity;
Fair Juliet, that with angels dost remain,
Accept this latest favour at my hands;
That living honour'd thee, and, being dead,
With funeral praises do adorn thy tomb!

[*The Boy whistles.*

The boy gives warning, something doth approach.
What cursed foot wanders this way to-night,
To cross my obsequies, and true love's rites?
What, with a torch!—muffle me, night, awhile. [*Retires.*

*Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR, with a Torch,
Mattock, &c.*

Rom. Give me that mattock, and the wrenching-iron.

* *Par.]* The lines spoken by Paris, in the folio, are
“ Sweet flow'r, with flow'rs thy bridal bed I strew;
O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones,
Which with sweet water nightly will I dew,
Or wanting that, with tears distill'd by moans.
The obsequies that I for thee will keep,
Nightly shall be, to strew thy grave and weep.

[*The Boy whistles.*”

The reading of the text is from the quarto of 1597.

Hold, take this letter ; early in the morning
 See thou deliver it to my lord and father.
 Give me the light : Upon thy life I charge thee,
 Whate'er thou hear'st or seest, stand all aloof,
 And do not interrupt me in my course.
 Why I descend into this bed of death,
 Is, partly, to behold my lady's face :
 But, chiefly, to take thence from her dead finger
 A precious ring ; a ring, that I must use
 In dear employment :^y therefore hence, be gone :—
 But if thou, jealous, doth return to pry
 In what I further shall intend to do,
 By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint,
 And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs :
 The time and my intents are savage-wild ;
 More fierce, and more inexorable far,
 Than empty tigers, or the roaring sea.

Bal. I will begone, sir ; and not trouble you.

Rom. So shalt thou show me friendship.—Take thou that :

Live, and be prosperous ; and farewell, good fellow.

Bal. For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout ;
 His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. [*Retires.*]

Rom. Thou détestable maw, thou womb of death,
 Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
 Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
 [*Breaking open the Door of the Monument.*]
 And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food !

Par. This is that banish'd haughty Montague,
 That murder'd my love's cousin ;—with which grief,
 It is supposed, the fair creature died,—
 And here is come to do some villainous shame
 To the dead bodies : I will apprehend him.— [*Advances.*]
 Stop thy unhallow'd toil, vile Montague ;
 Can vengeance be pursu'd further than death ?
 Condemn'd villain, I do apprehend thee :
 Obey, and go with me ; for thou must die.

Rom. I must, indeed ; and therefore came I hither.—

^y — dear employment:] That is, *action of importance*. Gems were supposed to have great powers and virtues.—*JOHNSON.*

Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,
 Fly hence and leave me ;—think upon these gone ;
 Let them affright thee.—I beseech thee, youth,
 Heap not another sin upon my head,
 By urging me to fury ;—O, be gone !
 By heaven, I love thee better than myself :
 For I come hither arm'd against myself ;
 Stay not, be gone :—live, and hereafter say,—
 A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

Par. I do defy thy conjurations,²
 And do attach thee as a felon here.

Rom. Wilt thou provoke me ? then have at thee, boy.

[*They fight.*]

Page. O Lord ! they fight : I will go call the watch.

[*Exit Page.*]

Par. O, I am slain ! [*falls.*—If thou be merciful,
 Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet. [*Dies.*]

Rom. In faith, I will :—Let me peruse this face ;—
 Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris :—
 What said my man, when my betossed soul
 Did not attend him as we rode ? I think,
 He told me, Paris should have married Juliet :
 Said he not so ? or did I dream it so ?
 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
 To think it was so ?—O, give me thy hand,
 One writ with me in sour misfortune's book !
 I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave,—
 A grave ? O, no ; a lantern,^a slaughter'd youth,
 For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
 This vault a feasting presence^b full of light.
 Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.^c

[*Laying PARIS in the Monument.*]

² *I do defy thy conjurations,*] i. e. I refuse to depart as thou conjurest me to do. To defy, in our old authors, frequently means to *disdain, refuse, or deny.*—MALONE and STEEVENS.

^a — *a lantern,*] i. e. A *louvre*, or what in ancient records is styled *lanternium*, i. e. a spacious round or octagonal turret full of windows, by means of which cathedrals, and sometimes halls, are illuminated. See the beautiful *lantern* at Ely minster.—STEEVENS.

^b — *presence*—] i. e. A *publick* room.

^c — *by a dead man interr'd.*] Romeo being now determined to put an end to his life, considers himself as already dead.—MALONE.

How oft when men are at the point of death,
 Have they been merry? which their keepers call
 A lightning before death: O, how may I
 Call this a lightning?^d—O, my love! my wife!
 Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
 Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there.—
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
 O, what more favour can I do to thee,
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
 To sunder his that was thine enemy?
 Forgive me, cousin!—Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial death is amorous;
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
 For fear of that, I will still stay with thee;
 And never from this palace of dim night
 Depart again; here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest;
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
 From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your last!
 Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss,
 A dateless bargain to engrossing death!
 Come, bitter conduct,^e come, unsavoury guide!
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
 The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
 Here's to my love!—[*Drinks.*] O, true apothecary!
 Thy drugs are quick.—Thus with a kiss I die. [Dies.^f

^d — O, how may I

Call this a lightning?] Romeo had, just before, been in high spirits, a symptom, which he observes, was sometimes called a *lightning* before death: but how, says he, can I term this *sad* and *gloomy* prospect a *lightning*?—
 RITSON.

^e — conduct,] For *conductor*.

^f Dies.] Shakspeare has been arraigned for departing from the Italian novel, in making Romeo die before Juliet awakes from her trance; and thus losing a happy opportunity of introducing an affecting scene between these unfortu-

Enter, at the end of the Churchyard, Friar LAURENCE, with a Lantern, Crow, and Spade.

Fri. Saint Francis be my speed ! how oft to-night
Have my old feet stumbled at graves ?^g—Who's there ?
Who is it that consorts, so late, the dead ?^h

Bal. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

Fri. Bliss be upon you ! Tell me, good my friend,
What torch is yond', that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls ? as I discern,
It burneth in the Capels' monument.

Bal. It doth so, holy sir ; and there's my master,
One that you love.

Fri. Who is it ?

Bal. Romeo.

Fri. How long hath he been there ?

Bal. Full half an hour.

Fri. Go with me to the vault.

Bal. I dare not, sir :

My master knows not, but I am gone hence ;
And fearfully did menace me with death,
If I did stay to look on his intents.

Fri. Stay then, I'll go alone :—Fear comes upon me ;
O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

Bal. As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought,ⁱ
And that my master slew him.

Fri. Romeo ?— [*Advances.*

nate lovers. But he undoubtedly had never read the Italian novel or any *literal* translation of it, and was misled by the poem of *Romeus and Juliet*, the author of which departed from the Italian story, making the poison take effect on Romeo before Juliet awakes.—MALONE.

^g *Have my old feet stumbled at graves ?*] This accident was reckoned ominous.—STEEVENS.

^h — *consorts,*] i.e. *Keeps company with.*—STEEVENS.

ⁱ *I dreamt my master and another fought,*] This is one of the touches of nature that would have escaped the hand of any painter less attentive to it than Shakespeare. What happens to a person while he is under the manifest influence of fear, will seem to him, when he is recovered from it, like a dream. Homer, book 8th, represents Rhesus dying fast asleep, and as it were beholding his enemy in a dream plunging a sword into his bosom. Eustathius and Dacier both applaud this image as very natural ; for a man in such a condition, says Mr. Pope, awakes no further than to see confusedly what environs him, and to think it not a reality, but a vision.—STEEVENS.

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains
 The stony entrance of this sepulchre?—
 What mean these masterless and gory swords
 To lie discolour'd by this place of peace?

[*Enters the Monument.*]

Romeo! O, pale!—Who else? what, Paris too?
 And steep'd in blood?—Ah, what an unkind hour
 Is guilty of this lamentable chance!—

The lady stirs.

[*JULIET wakes and stirs.*]

Jul. O, comfortable friar! where is my lord?
 I do remember well where I should be,
 And there I am:—Where is my Romeo? [*Noise within.*]

Fri. I hear some noise.—Lady, come from that nest
 Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep;
 A greater Power than we can contradict
 Hath thwarted our intents; come, come away;
 Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;
 And Paris too; come, I'll dispose of thee
 Among a sisterhood of holy nuns;
 Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;
 Come, go, good Juliet,—[*Noise again.*] I dare stay no
 longer. [*Exit.*]

Jul. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.—
 What's here? a cup, clos'd in my true love's hand?
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:—
 O churl! drink all; and leave no friendly drop,
 To help me after?—I will kiss thy lips;
 Haply, some poison yet doth hang on them,
 To make me die with a restorative. [*Kisses him.*]
 Thy lips are warm!

1 Watch. [*within.*] Lead, boy:—Which way?

Jul. Yea, noise?—then I'll be brief.—O happy dagger!
 [*Snatching ROMEO'S Dagger.*]
 This is thy sheath; [*stabs herself.*] there rust, and let me
 die. [*Falls on ROMEO'S Body, and dies.*]

Enter Watch, with the Page of PARIS.

Page. This is the place; there, where the torch doth
 burn.

1 *Watch*. The ground is bloody; Search about the churchyard:
Go, some of you, whoe'er you find, attach.

[*Exeunt some.*

Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain;
And Juliet bleeding; warm, and newly dead,
Who here hath lain these two days buried.—
Go, tell the prince,—run to the Capulets,—
Raise up the Montagues,—some others search;—
[*Exeunt other Watchmen.*

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;
But the true ground of all these piteous woes,
We cannot without circumstance descry.

Enter some of the Watch, with BALTHASAR.

2 *Watch*. Here's Romeo's man, we found him in the churchyard.

1 *Watch*. Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

Enter another Watchman, with Friar LAURENCE.

3 *Watch*. Here is a friar, that trembles, sighs, and weeps:
We took this mattock and this spade from him,
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

1 *Watch*. A great suspicion; Stay the friar too.

Enter the Prince and Attendants.

Prince. What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning's rest?

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, and others.

Cap. What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

La. Cap. The people in the street cry—Romeo,
Some—Juliet, and some—Paris; and all run,
With open outcry, toward our monument.

Prince. What fear is this, which startles in our ears?

1 *Watch*. Sovereign, here lies the county Paris slain;
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new kill'd.

Prince. Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

1 *Watch.* Here is a friar, and slaughter'd Romeo's man;
With instruments upon them, fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

Cap. O, heavens!—O, wife! look how our daughter
bleeds!

This dagger hath mista'en,—for, lo! his house
Is empty on the back of Montague,—
And it mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.^k

La. Cap. O me! this sight of death is as a bell,
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

Enter MONTAGUE and others.

Prince. Come, Montague; for thou art early up,
To see thy son and heir more early down.

Mon. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath;
What further woe conspires against mine age?

Prince. Look, and thou shalt see.

Mon. O thou untaught! what manners is in this,
To press before thy father to a grave?

Prince. Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,
Till we can clear these ambiguities,
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes,
And lead you even to death: Mean time forbear,
And let mischance be slave to patience.—
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

Fri. I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place
Doth make against me, of this direful murder;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself excus'd.

Prince. Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

Fri. I will be brief,^l for my short date of breath

^k This dagger hath mista'en,—for, lo! his house

Is empty on the back of Montague,—

And it mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.] Shakspeare quaintly represents the dagger as having mistaken its place, and “it mis-sheathed,” i. e. “mis-sheathed itself” in the bosom of Juliet. It appears that the dagger was anciently worn behind the back.—STEEVENS.

^l I will be brief.] It is much to be lamented, that the poet did not conclude the dialogue with the action, and avoid a narrative of events which the audience already knew.—JOHNSON.

Is not so long as is a tedious tale.

Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife:
I married them; and their stolen marriage-day
Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death
Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from this city;
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pin'd.

You—to remove that siege of grief from her,—
Betroth'd, and would have married her perforce,
To county Paris:—Then comes she to me;
And, with wild looks, bid me devise some means
To rid her from this second marriage,
Or, in my cell there would she kill herself.

Then gave I her, so tutor'd by my art,
A sleeping potion; which so took effect
As I intended, for it wrought on her
The form of death: meantime I writ to Romeo,
That he should hither come as this dire night,
To help to take her from her borrow'd grave,
Being the time the potion's force should cease:

But he which bore my letter, friar John,
Was staid by accident; and yesternight
Return'd my letter back: Then all alone,
At the prefixed hour of her waking,
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;
Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo:
But, when I came, (some minute ere the time
Of her awakening,) here untimely lay
The noble Paris, and true Romeo, dead.

She wakes; and I entreated her come forth,
And bear this work of heaven with patience:
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb;
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,
But (as it seems) did violence on herself.

All this I know; and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy: And, if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrific'd, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

Prince. We still have known thee for a holy man.—
Where's Romeo's man? what can he say in this?

Bal. I brought my master news of Juliet's death;
And then in post he came from Mantua,
To this same place, to this same monument.
This letter he early bid me give his father;
And threaten'd me with death, going in the vault,
If I departed not, and left him there.

Prince. Give me the letter, I will look on it.
Where is the county's page, that rais'd the watch?
Sirrah, what made your master in this place?—

Page. He came with flowers to strew his lady's
grave;
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did:
Anon, comes one with light to ope the tomb;
And, by and by, my master drew on him;
And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince. This letter doth make good the friar's words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death;
And here he writes—that he did buy a poison
Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.—
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen:^m—all are punish'd.

Cap. O, brother Montague, give me thy hand:
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
Can I demand.

Mon. But I can give thee more:
For I will raise her statue in pure gold;
That, while Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set,
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

Cap. As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie;
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

^m *Have lost a brace of kinsmen:*] Mercutio and Paris: Mercutio is expressly called the prince's kinsman in act III. sc. iv.; and that Paris also was the prince's kinsman, may be inferred from other passages.—MALONE.

Prince. A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
 The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head :
 Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things ;
 Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished :ⁿ
 For never was a story of more woe
 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. [*Exeunt.*°

ⁿ *Some shall be pardon'd and some punished:]* This line has reference to the novel from which the fable is taken. Here we read that Juliet's female attendant was banished for concealing the marriage ; Romeo's servant set at liberty because he had only acted in obedience to his master's orders ; the apothecary taken, tortured, condemned, and hanged ; while friar Laurence was permitted to retire to a hermitage in the neighbourhood of Verona, where he ended his life in penitence and tranquillity.—STEEVENS.

° This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents are numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakspeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakspeare, that *he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him.* Yet he thinks him *no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed, without danger to the poet.* Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, in a pointed sentence, that more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life ; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play ; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakspeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden ; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The Nurse is one of the characters in which the author delighted : he has, with great subtlety of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comick scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, *have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit.**—JOHNSON.

* This quotation is also found in the Preface to Dryden's fables : "*Just John Littlewit in Bartholomew Fair, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery ; a miserable conceit.*"—STEEVENS.

H A M L E T.

THE first edition of this splendid tragedy, which has been recently discovered, was printed in 1603. It was among the earliest of our Author's works; and Steevens saw a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr. Gabriel Harvey (the antagonist of Nash), who, in his own handwriting, has set down *Hamlet*, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis*; but his *Lucrece*, and his tragedy of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, this play was entered by James Roberts, July 26, 1602, under the title of "A booke called *The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmarke*, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servantes."

The story on which the play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels; and from this latter work, the *Hystorie of Hamblett*, quarto, bl. l. was translated.

The frequent allusions of contemporary authors to this play sufficiently show its popularity. Thus, in Decker's *Bel-man's Nightwalkes*, 4to. 1612, we have—"But if any *mad Hamlet*, hearing this, smell villainie, and rush in by violence to see what the tawny diuels [gypsies] are dooing, then they excuse the fact," &c. Again, in an old collection of satirical poems, called *The Night-Raven*, is this couplet:

"I will not cry *Hamlet Revenge* my greēves,
But I will call Hangman, *Revenge* on thieves."

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CLAUDIUS, *king of Denmark.*

HAMLET,^a *son to the former, and nephew to the present king.*

POLONIUS, *lord chamberlain.*

HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet.*

LAERTES, *son to Polonius.*

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSENCRANTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

} *courtiers.*

OSRIC, *a courtier.*

Another Courtier.

A Priest.

MARCELLUS,

BERNARDO,

} *officers.*

FRANCISCO, *a soldier.*

REYNALDO, *servant to Polonius.*

A Captain. An Ambassador.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

FORTINBRAS, *prince of Norway.*

GERTRUDE, *queen of Denmark, and mother of Hamlet.*

OPHELIA, *daughter of Polonius.*

*Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Grave-diggers,
Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.*

Scene, Elsinore.

^a *Hamlet,*] i. e. *Amleth.* The *h* transferred from the end to the beginning of the name.—STEEVENS.

HAMLET,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Elsinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO on his Post. *Enter to him* BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me:^a stand, and unfold Yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night,
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals^b of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think, I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

^a —me:] i. e. Me who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word.—STEEVENS.

^b —rivals—] i. c. Partners.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier :
Who hath relieved you ?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit FRANCISCO.*]

Mar. Holla ! Bernardo !

Ber. Say.
What, is Horatio, there ?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio ; welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night ?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy ;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :
Therefore I have entreated him, along
With us to watch the minutes of this night ;
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes,^c and speak to it.

Hor. Tush ! tush ! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile ;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven,
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Mar. Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes
again !

Enter Ghost.

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.^d

^c — approve our eyes,] i. e. Add a new testimony to that of our eyes. *To approve*, in Shakspeare's time, signified *to make good*, or *establish*.—JOHNSON and MALONE.

^d *Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.*] Exorcisms were usually performed in Latin.—DOUCE.

Hor. Most like:—it harrows me^e with fear, and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay; speak: speak I charge thee, speak.

[*Exit Ghost.*]

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble, and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on,
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded^f Polack on the ice.^g
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus, twice before, and jump at this dead hour,^h
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work,ⁱ I know not;
But, in the gross and scope^k of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch

^e — it harrows me, &c.] To harrow is to conquer, to subdue. The word is of Saxon origin.—STEEVENS.

^f —sledded—] i. e. Borne on a sledge, or sled.

^g He smote the sledded Polack on the ice.] He speaks of a prince of Poland whom he slew in battle. Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland. Polaque, Fr.—POPE and JOHNSON.

^h — jump at this dead hour,] i. e. Just at this dead hour: jump and just were synonymous.

ⁱ In what particular thought to work,] i. e. What particular train of thinking to follow.—STEEVENS.

^k — gross and scope—] General thoughts, and tendency at large.—JOHNSON.

So nightly toils the subject of the land?
 And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
 And foreign marts for implements of war:
 Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
 Does not divide the Sunday from the week:
 What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
 Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day;
 Who is't, that can inform me?

Hor.

That can I;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
 Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
 Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
 Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
 Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
 (For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)
 Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,
 Well ratified by law, and heraldry,¹
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
 Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
 Against the which, a moiety competent
 Was gaged^m by our king; which had return'd
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same co-mart,ⁿ
 And carriage^o of the article design'd,^p
 His fell to Hamlet: Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved^q mettle hot and full,
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Shark'd up a list^r of landless resolute,
 For food and diet, to some enterprize
 That hath a stomach in't:^s which is no other

¹ ——— *law, and heraldry,*] When the right of property was to be determined by combat, the rules of *heraldry* were to be attended to as well as those of *law*. M. MASON.

^m ——— *gaged*—] i. e. Laid as a wager.—NARES.

ⁿ ——— *co-mart,*] i. e. *Joint bargain*. The word does not occur in any other place.

^o ——— *carriage*—] i. e. Import, tendency.

^p ——— *design'd,*] i. e. Drawn up.

^q ——— *unimproved*—] i. e. Uncensured, unimpeached. See GIFFORD'S *Ben Jonson*, vol. i. 88.

^r *Shark'd up a list, &c.*] i. e. Collected in a banditti-like manner, a set of rogues and vagabonds; *to shark* is nearly equivalent to the modern word *to swindle*.—NARES.

^s *That hath a stomach in't:*] i. e. That hath a *spirit*, or excitement in it: an uncommon use of the word.

(As it doth well appear unto our state,)
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,
 And terms compulsory, those 'foresaid lands
 So by his father lost: And this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations;
 The source of this our watch; and the chief head
 Of this post-haste and romage^t in the land.

[*Ber.* I think,^u it be no other, but even so:
 Well may it sort,^x that this portentous figure
 Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
 That was, and is, the question^y of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is, to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy^z state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:
 As, stars with trains of fire shed dews of blood,
 Disasters dimm'd the sun;^a and the moist star,^b
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,—
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,
 And prologue to the omen coming on,^d—
 Have heaven and earth together démonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.—]

^t — romage]—or *rummage*, i. e. Tumultuous movement.—JOHNSON.

^u [*I think*, &c.] These, and all other lines, confined within crotchets, throughout this play, and some others which we have not noticed, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation.—JOHNSON.

^x *Well may it sort*,] The cause and effect are proportionate and suitable.—JOHNSON.

^y — *the question*—] i. e. The theme or subject.

^z — *palmy*—] i. e. *Victorious*.

^a *As, stars with trains of fire shed dews of blood,*

Disasters dimm'd the sun; &c.] The original reading of these lines is,

As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

Disasters in the sun; &c.]

These corrupted lines the commentators have attempted to put right: the reading I have adopted is the one which departs least from the letter of the text; *disasters* are the *blasts* or *strokes* of *unfavourable planets*.

^b — *the moist star*, &c.] i. e. The moon.

^c — *omen coming on*,] i. e. *Portentous event at hand*. *Omen* was anciently used in the sense of *fate*.—FARMER.

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft ; behold ! lo, where it comes again !
I'll cross it, though it blast me.—Stay, illusion !

If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,

Speak to me :

If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,

Speak to me :

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,

O, speak !

Or, if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,

[*Cock crows.*

Speak of it :—stay, and speak.—Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partizan ?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here !

Hor. 'Tis here !

Mar. 'Tis gone ! [Exit Ghost.^e

We do it wrong, being so majestic,al,
To offer it the show of violence ;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet of the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day ; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea, or fire, in earth or air,^d

^d *Exit Ghost.*] The moment of the evanescence of spirits was supposed to be limited to the crowing of the cock. This belief is mentioned as early as Prudentius, *Cathem. Hymn.* i. v. 40. But some of his commentators prove it to be of much higher antiquity.—T. WARTON.

^e *Whether in sea, &c.*] According to the pneumatology of that time, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that all *spirits extravagant*, wandering out of their element, whether aërial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined*.—JOHNSON.

The extravagant and erring^e spirit hies
To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes,^f nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :
Break we our watch up ; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet : for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him :
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.^g [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The same. A Room of State in the same.

*Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.*

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green ; and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe ;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,

^e — *extravagant and erring*—] *Extravagant* means here, having got beyond his bounds ; *erring* is wandering.—WARBURTON and STEEVENS.

^f — *takes,*] i. e. *Strikes* with lameness or diseases. This sense of *take* is frequent in this author.—JOHNSON.

^g — *conveniently.*] So quarto, 1603.

Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
 The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
 Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,—
 With one auspicious, and one dropping eye ;
 With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,^h—
 Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
 With this affair along :—For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,—
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth ;
 Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
 Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,ⁱ
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
 Importing the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
 To our most valiant brother.—So much for him.
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
 Thus much the business is : We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
 His further gait^k herein ; in that the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject :—and we here despatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the king, more than the scope^l
 Of these dilated articles^m allow.
 Farewell ; and let your haste commend your duty.

^h — *dole*,] i. e. Lamentation.

ⁱ *Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage*,] i. e. The imaginary advantage, which Fortinbras hoped to derive from the unsettled state of the kingdom.—M. MASON.

^k — *gait*—] i. e. *Proceeding, passage* ; from the A. S. verb *gae*. A gate for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north.—PERCY.

^l — *more than the scope*—] More is comprized in the general design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffused and dilated style.—JOHNSON.

^m — *dilated articles, &c.*] i. e. The articles when dilated.

Cor. Vol. In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?

You told us of some suit ; What is't, Laertes ?

You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,

And lose your voice : What would'st thou beg, Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?

The head is not more native to the heart,

The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.ⁿ

What would'st thou have, Laertes ?

Laer.

My dread lord,

Your leave and favour to return to France ;

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation ;

Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave ? What says Polonius ?

Pol. He hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow leave,

By laboursome petition ; and, at last,

Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent ;^o

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,

And thy best graces :^p spend it at thy will.—

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.^q

[*Aside.*

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you ?

Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i'the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,

ⁿ *Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.*] i. e. He may do what he pleases with my kingly authority.—STEEVENS.

^o These lines between crotchets are omitted in the folio.

^p *And thy best graces :*] Johnson proposes to read, *and my best graces.*

^q *Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.*] *Kind* is the Teutonic word for *child*. Hamlet therefore answers with propriety to the titles of *cousin* and *son*, which the king had given him, that he was something more than *cousin*, and less than *son*.—JOHNSON.

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
 Do not, for ever, with thy veiled lids^r
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust :
 Thou know'st, 'tis common ; all, that live, must die,
 Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen.

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee ?

Ham. Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not seems.
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
 Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
 That can denote me truly : These, indeed, seem,
 For they are actions that a man might play :
 But I have that within, which passeth show ;
 These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
 Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father :
 But, you must know, your father lost a father ;
 That father lost, lost his ; and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation, for some term
 To do obsequious^s sorrow : But to perséver
 In obstinate condolément,^t is a course
 Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief :
 It shows a will most incorrect^u to heaven ;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient :
 An understanding simple and unschool'd :
 For what, we know, must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart ? Fye ! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

—— *veiled lids*—] i. e. With downcast eyes.

^s —— *obsequious*—] i. e. *Funereal* ; from *obsequies*.

—— *condolément*,] For sorrow.

^u —— *incorrect*—] i. e. *Ill-regulated*, not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of Providence.—MALONE.

To reason most absurd;^x whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe; and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And, with no less nobility of love,^y
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you.^z For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,^a
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And, we beseech you, bend you to remain^b
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health,^c that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
And the king's rouse^d the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, Lords, &c.* POLONIUS,
and LAERTES.

^x *To reason most absurd;*] Reason is here used in its common sense, for the faculty by which we form conclusions from arguments.—JOHNSON.

^y — *nobility of love,*] i. e. Eminence and distinction of love.—HEATH.

^z *Do I impart toward you.*] I believe impart is impart myself, communicate whatever I can bestow.—JOHNSON.

^a — *Wittenberg,*] In Shakspeare's time there was a university at Wittenberg; which, however, was not founded till 1502, consequently did not exist in the time to which this play is referred.—MALONE.

^b — *bend you to remain*—] i. e. Subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c.—STEEVENS.

^c *No jocund health,*] The king's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink.—JOHNSON.

^d — *rouse*—] *Rouse* and *carouse*, like *vye* and *revye*, are but the reciprocation of the same action. A *rouse* was a large glass ("not past a pint," as Iago says), in which a health was given, the drinking of which by the rest of the company formed a *carouse*.—GIFFORD'S *Massinger*, vol. i. 239.

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve^e itself into a dew!
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!
 Fye on't! O fye! 'tis an unweeded garden,
 That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
 Possess it merely.^f That it should come to this!
 But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two;
 So excellent a king; that was, to this,
 Hyperion^g to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
 That he might not beteen^h the winds of heaven
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
 Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 By what it fed on: And yet, within a month,—
 Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is woman!ⁱ—
 A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she,—
 O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,ⁱ
 Would have mourn'd longer,—married with my uncle,
 My father's brother; but no more like my father,
 Than I to Hercules: Within a month;
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears

^e ——— resolve—] The same as *dissolve*.

^f ——— merely.] Is *entirely, absolutely*.

^g *Hyperion*—] All our English poets are guilty of the same false quantity, and call *Hypérion*, *Hypérion*. In the present instance Shakspeare has no allusion except to the beauty of Apollo, and its immediate opposite the deformity of a satyr.—STEEVENS.

^h ——— beteen—] i. e. Permit, or suffer.

ⁱ ——— discourse of reason,] It is proposed by Gifford, *Massinger*, vol. i. 149, to read "discourse and reason:" he says, "It is very difficult to determine the precise meaning which our ancestors gave to *discourse*, or to distinguish the line which separated it from *reason*. Perhaps it indicated a *more rapid* deduction of consequences from premises, than was supposed to be effected by reason: but I speak with hesitation. Whatever be the sense, it frequently appears in our old writers, by whom it is usually coupled with *reason* or *judgment*." "*Discourse of reason*" is so poor and perplexed a phrase, that I should dismiss it at once, for what I believe to be the genuine language of Shakspeare, "*discourse and reason*."—I have not admitted his alteration because the phrase was, as Mr. Boswell has shown, in frequent use, and is found a second time in the works of our author himself, *Troilus and Cressida*, act ii. scene 2. *Discourse of reason* means the instruction or counsel of reason.

Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
 She married:—O most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
 It is not, nor it cannot come to, good;
 But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue!

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well:
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name^k
 with you.

And what make you^l from Wittenberg, Horatio?—
 Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord,——

Ham. I am very glad to see you; good even, sir,—
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so:
 Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
 To make it truster of your own report
 Against yourself: I know, you are no truant.
 But what is your affair in Elsinore?
 We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
 I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats^m
 Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
 Would I had met my dearestⁿ foe in heaven
 Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!—
 My father,—Methinks, I see my father.

^k — *I'll change that name—*] I'll be your servant, you shall be my friend.
 —JOHNSON.

^l — *what make you—*] A familiar phrase for *what are you doing.*—JOHNSON.

^m — *the funeral bak'd meats—*] It was anciently the general custom to give a cold entertainment to mourners at a funeral. In distant counties this practice is continued among the yeomanry.—MALONE.

ⁿ — *dearest—*] i. e. *Most immediate, consequential, important.*

Hor. Where,
My lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw! who?

Hor. My lord, the king your father.

Ham. The king my father!

Hor. Season^o your admiration for a while
With an attent^e ear; till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waist and middle of the night,^q
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Arm'd at point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprized eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,^r
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them, the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

^o Season—] That is, temper.

^q — attent—] For attentive.

^q In the dead waist and middle of the night,] This strange phraseology seems to have been common in the time of Shakspeare. By waist is meant nothing more than middle; but dead waste may be the true reading.—MALONE and STEEVENS.

^r — with the act of fear,] Fear was the cause, the active cause that distill'd them by the force of operation which we strictly call act in voluntary, and power in involuntary agents, but popularly call act in both.—JOHNSON.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did :

But answer made it none : yet once, methought,
It lifted up its head, and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak :
But, even then, the morning cock crew loud ;
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
And we did think it writ down in our duty,
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

All. We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd say you?

All. Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

All. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not
His face?

Hor. O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up.*

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more
In sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like,
Very like : Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hun-

Mar. Ber. Longer, longer. [dred.

Hor. Not when I saw it.

* — he wore his beaver up.] Though *beaver* properly signified that part of the helmet which was *let down*, to enable the wearer to drink, Shakspeare always uses the word as denoting that part of the helmet, which, when raised up, exposed the face of the wearer : and such was the popular signification of the word in his time.—MALONE.

Ham. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance, 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant, it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you: Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and
BERNARDO.

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would, the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in Polonius' House.

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.

Laer. My necessities are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,

The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;^t
No more.

Oph. No more but so ?

Laer. Think it no more :

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews,^u and bulk ; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now ;
And now no soil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
The virtue of his will :^x but, you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;
For he himself is subject to his birth :
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of the whole state ;
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
Whereof he is the head : Then if he says, he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed ; which is no further,
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs ;
Or lose your heart ; or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd^y importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister ;
And keep you in the rear of your affection,^z
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest^a maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon :
Virtue itself escapes not calumnious strokes :

^t *The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;*] i. e. What was supplied to us for a minute ; or, as M. Mason supposes, " an amusement to fill up a vacant moment, and render it agreeable."—STEEVENS.

^u *In thews,*] i. e. In sinews, muscular strength.

^x *And now no soil, nor cautel, doth besmirch*

The virtue of his will :] *Cautel* is craft ; the *virtue of his will* means, his virtuous intentions.—M. MASON.

^y — *unmaster'd*—] i. e. *Licentious*.

^z — *keep you in the rear, &c.*] That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you.—JOHNSON.

^a — *chariest*—] i. e. *Most cautious*.

The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd ;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then : best safety lies in fear ;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart: But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read.^b

Laer. O fear me not.
 I stay too long ;—But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.^c

A double blessing is a double grace ;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for shame ;
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,^d
 And you are staid for : There, my blessing with you ;
 [*Laying his hand on* LAERTES' *Head.*
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou charácter.^e Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

^b — *recks not his own read.*] That is, heeds not his own lessons.—POPE.

^c *Enter Polonius.*] Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel ; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phænomena of the character of Polonius.—JOHNSON.

^d — *the shoulder of your sail,*] This is a common sea phrase.—STEEVENS.

^e — *charácter.*] i. e. Write, strongly imprint.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
 The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel:
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.^f Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,
 Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
 Take each man's censure,^g but reserve thy judgement.
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
 And they in France, of the best rank and station,
 Are most select and generous, chief^h in that.
 Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.ⁱ
 This above all,—To thine ownself be true;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!^k

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.^l

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia: and remember well
 What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
 And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [Exit LAERTES.]

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the lord
 Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

^f But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.] The literal sense is, Do not make
 thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand. The figurative meaning
 may be, Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the differ-
 ence of characters.—JOHNSON.

^g — censure,] i. e. Opinion.

^h — chief—] For chiefly.

ⁱ — husbandry.] i. e. Of thrift; economical prudence.

^k — season this in thee!] Infix it in such a manner as that it never may
 wear out.—JOHNSON.

^l — tend.] i. e. Are waiting.

Wants
info
context

See also
1.1.100

Given private time to you : and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous :^x

If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,^x
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,^x
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour :^x
What is between you? give me up the truth.^x

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
Of his affection to me,^x

Pol. Affection? puh! you speak like a green girl,^x
Unsifted^m in such perilous circumstance.^x

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?^x

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.^x

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you : think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,^x
Which are not sterling. Tenderⁿ yourself more dearly;
Or, (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wrangling it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.^x

Oph. My lord, he hath impórtun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it;^o go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my
With almost all the holy vows of heaven. [lord,

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.^p I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows : these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making,—
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments^q at a higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, That he is young;
And with a larger tether may he walk,

^m Unsifted—] Unsifted for untried. Untried signifies either not tempted, or not refined; unsifted signifies the latter only, though the sense requires the former.—WARBURTON.

ⁿ Tender—] i. e. Regard with affection.

^o — fashion you may call it;] She uses fashion for manner, and he for a transient practice.—JOHNSON.

^p — springes to catch woodcocks.] This saying was proverbial.—STEEVENS.

^q — entreatments—] i. e. Entertainment, conversation.

Than may be given you : In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows : for they are brokers,^r
Not of that die which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,^s
The better to beguile. This is for all,—
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you ; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The Platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager^t air.

Ham. What hour now ?

Hor. I think, it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed ? I heard it not ; it then draws near the
season,

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A Flourish of Trumpets, and Ordnance shot off,
within.*]

What does this mean, my lord ?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassel,^u and the swaggering up-spring^x reels ;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom ?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't :

^r Do not believe his vows : for they are brokers.] A broker in old English meant a bawd or pimp.—MALONE.

^s — bonds,] i. e. Engagements of love. Theobald reads bawds, but without any authority.

^t — eager—] i. e. Sharp, aigre, Fr.

^u — wassel,] i. e. Festivity, intemperance.

^x — the swaggering up-spring—] The blustering upstart.—JOHNSON.

But to my mind,—though I am native here,
 And to the manner born,—it is a custom *Polonius*
More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel, east and west,
 Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations :
 They clepe us, drunkards, and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition ;^y and, indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.^z
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,)
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,^a
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason ;
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible manners ;^b—that these men,—
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect ;
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,^c—
 Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,^d)
 Shall in the general censure^e take corruption
 From that particular fault: The dram of base
Doth all the noble substance often dout,^f
To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes !

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us !—
 Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,

^y — addition ;] i. e. Title.

^z *The pith and marrow of our attribute.*] The best and most valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us.—JOHNSON.

^a — complexion.] i. e. Humour: as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatick, &c.—WARBURTON.

^b — that too much o'er-leavens

The form of plausible manners ;] That intermingles too much with their manners ; infects and corrupts them. *Plausible*, in our poet's age, signified gracious, pleasing, popular.—MALONE.

^c — star,—] i. e. Scar. It is a term of *farriery*: the white star or mark so common on the forehead of a dark coloured horse, is usually produced by making a scar on the place.—RITSON.

^d *As infinite as man may undergo,)]* As large as can be accumulated upon man.—JOHNSON.

^e — censure—] i. e. Opinion.

^f — dout,] i. e. Do out, extinguish.

Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
 That I will speak to thee ; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane : O, answer me :
 Let me not burst in ignorance ! but tell,
 Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements ! why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again ! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature,^g
 So horribly to shake our disposition,^h
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls ?
 Say, why is this ? wherefore ? what should we do ?

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removed ground :
 But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear ?
 I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;ⁱ
 And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself ?
 It waves me forth again ;—I'll follow it.

Hor. What, if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
 That beetles o'er his base^j into the sea ?
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,^k

^g — *fools of nature,*] i. e. Objects of nature's sport.

^h — *disposition,*] Here used for *frame*.—WARBURTON.

ⁱ — *pin's fee ;*] The value of a pin.

^j — *beetles o'er his base—*] i. e. Overhangs his base.

^k — *sovereignty of reason,*] *Sovereignty* is here merely a title of respect ;

what Polonius does to Ophelia
 ↓
And draw you into madness? think of it:
 The very place puts toys' of desperation,
 Without more motive, into every brain,
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
 And hears it roar beneath.

Ham.

It waves me still:—

Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham.

Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

Ham.

My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body
 As hardy as the Némean lion's nerve.— [Ghost beckons.
 Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[*Breaking from them.*

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:^m—

I say, away:—Go on, I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after:—To what issue will this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar.

Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter Ghost and HAMLET.

Ham. Whither wilt thou led me? speak, I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham.

I will.

and "to deprive your sovereignty of reason" means neither more nor less than "to deprive your lordship, or your honour, or your highness, of reason."—GIFFORD'S *Ben Jonson*, vol. v. 352.

^l — toys—] i. e. *Whims*.

^m — that lets me:—] To let among our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. It is still a word current in the law, and to be found in almost all leases.—STEEVENS.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood:—List, list, O list!—
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,—

Ham. O heaven!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder?

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know it; that I, with wings as swift
As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;
And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out, that sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd: but know, thou noble youth,

The serpent that did sting thy father's life,
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O, my prophetick soul! my uncle!

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
(O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming virtuous queen:

O, Hamlet, what a falling off was there!

From me, whose love was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!

But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven;
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.

But, soft! methinks, I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be:—Sleeping within mine orchard,

My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon^a in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body;
And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
And curd, like eager^o droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd:^p

^a — *hebenon*—] i. e. *Ebony*; the juice of which was supposed to be a deadly poison.—NARES.

^o — *eager*—] i. e. *Aigre*, sour.

^p — *despatch'd*:] For *bereft*.

parallel
with
perception
reality

parallel
poison

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;^a
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

Ham. O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

Ghost. If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glowworm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:
Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell?—O fye!—Hold, hold, my
heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.^a Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

^a *Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;*] *Unhousel'd* is without having received the sacrament. *Disappointed* is the same as *unappointed*, and may be properly explained *unprepared*. *Unanel'd* is without extreme unction.—STEEVENS.

^b *O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!*] Surely this is the exclamation of Hamlet; and no part of the Ghost's narrative, with which it has been, by a mistake of the press, confounded.—“It is,” says Dr. Johnson, “a proper, and natural exclamation in the mouth of Hamlet; who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech.”—On the stage it has always been spoken by the character to whom I have here, on Johnson's authority, attributed it.

^c — *this distracted globe.*] i.e. In this head confused with thought.—STEEVENS.

*Perception
Imagination*

My tables,¹—meet it is, I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark: [Writing.
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;^u
It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*

I have sworn't.

Hor. [within.] My lord, my lord,——

Mar. [within.] Lord Hamlet,——

Hor. [within.] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Mar. [within.] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.^x

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is't, my noble lord?

Hor. What news, my lord?

Ham. O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No;

You will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you then; would heart of man once
think it?—

But you'll be secret,——

Hor. Mar. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Ham. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all Denmark,
But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the
To tell us this. [grave,

Ham. Why, right; you are in the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,

¹ *My tables,*—] *Table-books* in the time of our author appear to have been used by all ranks of people. In the church they were filled with short notes of the sermon, and at the theatre with the sparkling sentences of the play.—MALONE.

^u —] *Now to my word;*] Hamlet alludes to the *watch-word* given every day in military service, which at this time he says is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*—STEEVENS.

^x —] *come, bird, come.*] This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them.—HAMMER.

I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part :
 You, as your business, and desire, shall point you ;—
 For every man hath business, and desire,
 Such as it is,—and, for my own poor part,
 Look you, I will go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily ; yes,
 'Faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
 And much offence too. Touching this vision here,—
 It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you ;
 For your desire to know what is between us,
 O'er-master it as you may. And now, good friends,
 As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
 Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord ?

We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Hor. Mar. My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.^y

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy ! say'st thou so ? art thou there,
 true-penny ?

Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—
 Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
 Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique* ? then we'll shift our ground :—

^y Upon my sword.] It was common to swear upon the cross which the old
 swords always had upon the hilt.—JOHNSON.

Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword :
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole ! can'st work i'the earth so fast ?

A worthy pioneer !—Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange !

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.²

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come ;—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy !
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet
To put an antick disposition on,—
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As, *Well, well, we know ;—or, We could, and if we would ;*
—or, If we list to speak ;—or, There be, an if they might ;—
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me :—This do you swear,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you !

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit !^a So, gentlemen,

² *And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.*] i. e. Seem not to know it—to be unacquainted with it.—M. MASON.

^a *Rest, rest, perturbed spirit !*] The skill displayed in Shakspeare's management of his ghost, is too considerable to be overlooked. He has rivetted our attention to it by a succession of forcible circumstances :—by the previous report of the terrified centinels,—by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks,—by its martial stride and discriminating armour, visible only by the glimpses of the moon,—by its long taciturnity,—by its preparation to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock,—by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet,—by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants,—by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform,—by its voice from beneath the earth,—and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet.

Hamlet's late interview with the spectre, must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramattick artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them, as afterwards to the queen. But suspense was our poet's object ; and

Parallel
Phrases
Observe

With all my love I do commend me to you :
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint ;—O cursed spite !
 That ever I was born to set it right !
 Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Room in Polonius' House.

Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.

Pol. Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
 Before you visit him, to make inquiry
 Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said : very well said. Look you, sir,
 Inquire me first what Danskers^c are in Paris ;
 And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
 What company, at what expence ; and finding,
 By this encompassment and drift of question,
 That they do know my son, come you more nearer
 Than your particular demands will touch it :

never was it more effectually created, than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.

The ghost in this tragedy, is allowed to be the genuine product of Shakspeare's strong imagination. When he afterwards avails himself of traditional phantoms, as in *Julius Cæsar* and *King Richard III.*, they are but inefficacious pageants ; nay, the apparition of Banquo is a mute exhibitor. Perhaps our poet despaired to equal the vigour of his early conceptions on the subject of preternatural beings, and therefore allotted them no further eminence in his dramas ; or was unwilling to diminish the power of his principal shade, by an injudicious repetition of congenial images.—STEEVENS.

^b — *Exeunt.*] Gildon asserts, but without stating his authority, that this scene was written by Shakspeare in the churchyard bordering his house at Stratford.—REED'S *Shakspeare*, vol. v. p. 4.

^c — *Danskers*—] *Danske* is the ancient name of Denmark.—STEEVENS.

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;
 As thus,—*I know his father, and his friends,*
And, in part, him ;—Do you mark this, Reynaldo ?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. *And, in part, him ;—but, you may say, not well :*
But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;
*Addicted so and so ;—*and there put on him
 What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
 But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
 As are companions noted and most known
 To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
 Drabbing :—You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.
 You must not put another scandal on him,^d
 That he is open to incontinency ;
 That's not my meaning :^e but breathe his faults so quaintly,
 That they may seem the taints of liberty :
 The flash and out-break of a fiery mind ;
 A savageness^f in unreclaimed blood,
 Of general assault.^g

Rey. But, my good lord,—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this ?

Rey. Ay, my lord,
 I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift ;
 And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant :
 You laying these slight sullies on my son,
 As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i'the working,
 Mark you,
 Your party in converse, him you would sound,

^d — another scandal—] i. e. A very different and more scandalous failing, namely, habitual incontinency.—MALONE.

^e *That's not my meaning :*] That is not what I mean when I permit you to accuse him of drabbing.—M. MASON.

^f — savageness—] i. e. Wildness.

^g *Of general assault.*] i. e. Such as youth in general is liable to.—WARBURTON.

Having ever seen, in the prenominate^b crimes,
The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,
He closes with you in this consequence;
Good sir, or so; or *friend*, or *gentleman*,—
According to the phrase, or the addition,
Of man, and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this,—He does—
What was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to
say something:—Where did I leave?

Rey. At, closes in the consequence.

Pol. At, closes in the consequence,—*Ay, marry;*
He closes with you thus:—*I know the gentleman;*
I saw him yesterday, or, t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming; there o'ertook in his rouse:
There falling out at tennis; or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(*Videlicet*, a brothel,) *or so forth,—*
See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

With windlances,¹ and with assays of bias,^k

By indirections find directions out; *this is Polonius' method*

So, by my former lecture and advice,

Shall you my son: You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord,—

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.^l *this is Polonius' method*

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his musick.

Rey.

Well, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

^b — prenominate—] i. e. Already named.

¹ — windlances,] Metaphorically used for contrivances, subtleties; a windlace is a machine for winding up great weights.—NARES.

^k — assays of bias,] i. e. Experiments of his inclination; from *essayer*, Fr.

^l — in yourself.] In your own person, not by spies.—JOHNSON.

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell!—How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of heaven?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;^m
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know;
But, truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,ⁿ
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o'doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love;
Whose violent property foredoes itself,^o

^m Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;] Down-gyved means, hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters round the ancles.—
STEEVENS.

ⁿ — bulk,] i. e. Body.

^o — foredoes—] Destroys.

And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven,
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—

What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Oph. No, my good lord; but as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.

I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgment,
I had not quoted him:^p I fear'd he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
It seems, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which being kept close, might move,
More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.^q
Come.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and Attendants.*

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need, we have to use you, did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since not the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was: What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,

^p — quoted him.] i. e. Observed him, to quote is invariably used in Shakspeare in the sense of to mark, or observe.—M. MASON.

^q This must be known; which, being kept close, might move

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.] i. e. This must be made known to the king, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the uttering or revealing of it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet.—JOHNSON.

I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
 That,—being of so young days brought up with him;
 And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,—
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time: so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
 And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry,^r and good will,
 As to expend your time with us a while,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,^s
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
 Put your dread pleasures more into command
 Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey;
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,^t
 To lay our service freely at your feet,
 To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz:
 And I beseech you instantly to visit
 My too much changed son.—Go, some of you,
 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence, and our practices,
 Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and some Attendants.]

^r — gentry,] i. e. *Complaisance*.

^s *For the supply, &c.*] That the hope which your arrival has raised may be completed by the desired effect.—JOHNSON.

^t — *in the full bent,*] i. e. *In the utmost extremity of exertion.* The allusion is to a bow bent as far as it will go.—MALONE.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king :
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy^u so sure
As it hath us'd to do,) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit^x to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

(*Queen.* I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.) *insight*

Re-enter POLONIUS *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall sift him.—Welcome, my good
friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings, and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd,—
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
Was falsely borne in hand,^y—sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;

^u — the trail of policy—] The trail is the course of an animal pursued by the scent.—JOHNSON.

^x — the fruit—] The desert after the meat.—JOHNSON.

^y — borne in hand,] i. e. Imposed on.

Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
 Makes vow before his uncle, never more
 To give the assay^z of arms against your majesty.
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;^a
 And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
 So levied as before, against the Polack:
 With an entreaty, herein further shown, [*Gives a Paper.*
 That it might please you to give quiet pass
 Through your dominions for this enterprize;
 On such regards of safety, and allowance,
 As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
 And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.
 Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour;
 Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:
 Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

Pol. This business is well ended.
 My liege, and madam, to expostulate^b
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore,—since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,—
 I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:
 Mad call I it: for, to define true madness,
 What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:
 But let that go.

Queen.

~~More matter, with less art.~~ *insight*

Pol. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity;
 And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then: and now remains,

^z To give the assay—] To take the assay was a technical expression, originally applied to those who tasted wine for princes and great men.—MALONE.

^a — fee;] i. e. Reward.

^b — to expostulate—] i. e. To discuss.

That we find out the cause of this effect;
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
For this effect, defective, comes by cause: *Thro' a play*
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.

I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise.

ghosts in his power

—*To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified^c*
Ophelia,—

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile
phrase; but you shall hear.—Thus:—

In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.—

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay a while; I will be faithful.—

Doubt thou, the stars are fire;

[Reads.

Doubt, that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt, I love.

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not
art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most
best, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him,^d Hamlet.

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me:
And more above,^e hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

^c — *beautified*.—] For *beautiful*. Vile as this phrase may be, it was certainly a common one in those times, particularly in the addresses of letters.—NARES.

^d — *whilst this machine is to him*,] This phrase seems to have a French construction. *Pendant que cette machine est à lui*.—STEEVENS.

^e — *more above*,]—is, moreover, besides.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
 (As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me.) what might you,
 Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
 If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
 Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
 What might you think? no, I went round to work,
 And my young mistress thus did I bespeak;
Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;
This must not be: and then I precepts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;^f
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;
 Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;
 Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think, 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain know that,) That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
 When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*

If circumstances lead me, I will find
 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
 Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together,

Here in the lobby.

^f*Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;*] She took the fruits of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made fruitful.—JOHNSON.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras then ;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm, and carters.

King. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away ;
I'll board him^s presently :—O, give me leave.—

[Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.]

How does my good lord Hamlet ?

Ham. Well, God-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord ?

Ham. Excellent well ; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord ?

Ham. Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter ?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i'the sun : conception is a blessing ; but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to't.

Pol. How say you by that ? *[Aside.]* Still harping on my daughter :—yet he knew me not at first ; he said, I was a fishmonger : He is far gone, far gone : and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love ; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord ?

Ham. Words, words, words !

^s I'll board him—] i. e. Accost, address him.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here, that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: All of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o'the air.—How pregnant sometimes his replies are!^h a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ,ⁱ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. God save you, sir!

[*To* POLONIUS.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.

Guil. My honour'd lord!—

Ros. My most dear lord!—

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

^h ——— *pregnant*—] i. e. *Ready, dexterous, apt.*

ⁱ ——— *Rosencrantz*—] There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written.—STEEVENS.

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy ;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe ?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle
of her favours ?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune ? O, most true ;
she is a strumpet. What news ?

Ros. None, my lord ; but that the world's grown
honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near : But your news is not
true. [Let me^k question more in particular : What have
you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune,
that she sends you to prison hither ?

Guil. Prison, my lord !

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one ; in which there are many con-
finés, wards, and dungeons ; Denmark being one of the
worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you : for there is nothing
either good or bad, but thinking makes it so : to me it is
a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one ; 'tis too
narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God ! I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and
count myself a king of infinite space ; were it not that I
have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition ; for the
very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of
a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a
quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies ; and our mo-

^k — [Let me, &c.] All within crotchets is wanting in the quartos.—
STEEVENS.

narchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows : Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny.¹ Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Any thing—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. What say you? [To GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you;^m [*aside.*—if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late, (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me

— too dear, a halfpenny.] i. e. A halfpenny too dear: they are worth nothing.—MALONE.

^m — an eye of you;] Or, on you.

a steril promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me,—nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there is no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said, *Man delights not me?*

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment^a the players shall receive from you: we coted^b them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king, shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me: the adventurous knight shall use his foil, and target: the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humourous man shall end his part in peace: the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the sere;^c and the lady shall say her mind freely,^d or the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it, they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.^e

^a — *lenten entertainment*—] i. e. Sparing, like the entertainments given in Lent.—STEEVENS.

^b — *coted*—] i. e. *Past by*; from *costoyer* old French, from which the *s* was soon dropped and is not now written.—NARES.

^c — *whose lungs are tickled o'the sere*;] *Of the sere*, for *by the sere*,—a parched affection of the throat, a dry cough.

^d — *the lady shall say her mind*, &c.] The lady shall mar the measure of the verse, rather than not express herself freely or fully.—HENDERSON.

^e — *their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation*.] i. e. "Their

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

[*Ham.* How comes it?^s Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, sir, an aiery of children,^t little eyases,^u that cry out on the top of question,^x and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them,) that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted?^y Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?^z will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy:^a there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the new customs of introducing personal abuse into their comedies." Several companies of actors in the time of our author were silenced on account of this licentious practice.—STEEVENS.

^s [*Ham.* How comes it?] These lines enclosed in crotchets are not in any of the quarto's.—JOHNSON.

^t — an aiery of children,] Aiery signifies both a young brood of hawks, and the nest itself.—MALONE. The children here alluded to were the young singing men of the Chapel Royal or St. Paul's.—STEEVENS.

^u — eyases,] i. e. Young nestlings.

^x — on the top of question,] i. e. In the highest notes of voice that can be uttered. Question signifies in this, as in many other places, conversation, discourse.—STEEVENS.

^y — escoted?] i. e. Paid. From the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning.—JOHNSON.

^z Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?] Will they follow the profession of players no longer than they can keep the voice of boys, and sing in the choir?—JOHNSON.

^a — to tarre them on to controversy:] To provoke any animal to rage, is to tarre him. The word is said to come from the Greek word *ταρασσω*.—JOHNSON.

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.^{b]}

Ham. It is not very strange: for my uncle^c is king of Denmark; and those, that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little.^d 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [*Flourish of Trumpets within.*]

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands. Come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply^e with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw.^f

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern,—and you too;—at each ear a hearer; that great baby, you see there, is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

Ros. Happily, he's the second time come to them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophecy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.—You say right, sir; o'Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

^b — *Hercules and his load too.*] The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the globe*.—STEEVENS.

^c *It is not very strange: for my uncle—*] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants.—JOHNSON.

^d — *in little.*] i. e. In miniature.

^e — *let me comply, &c.*] *Comply* is apparently used in the sense of *compliment*.—STEEVENS.

^f — *I know a hawk from a hand-saw.*] This was a common proverbial speech.—WARBURTON.

Ham. Buz, buz!^s

Pol. Upon my honour,—

Ham. *Then came each actor on his ass,*^b—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ,ⁱ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O *Jephthah, judge of Israel*,—what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why—*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.*

Pol. Still on my daughter. [*Aside.*

Ham. Am I not i'the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you can call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

Ham. Why, *As by lot, God wot,*^k and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*,—The first row of the pious chanson^l will show you more: for look, my abridgment^m comes.

^s *Buz, buz!*] Mere idle talk.—JOHNSON.

^b *Then came each actor on his ass,*—] This seems to be a line of a ballad.—JOHNSON.

ⁱ —writ,] i. e. writing, composition.

^k *Why, as by lot, God wot, &c.*] The old song from which these quotations are taken, has a place in Dr. Percy's *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*.—STEEVENS. The ballad of "*Jepha judge of Israel*," which is imperfectly given in Percy's *Reliques*, I. 189. 1794. is printed in Evans' *Old Ballads*. 8vo. 1810. I. 7. The first stanza is,

"I have read that many years agoe,
When Jepha, judge of Israel,
Had one fair daughter und no more,
Whom he loved passing well.
And as by lot, God wot,
It came to passe most like it was,
Great warrs there should be,
And who should be the chiefe but he, but he."

^l —the pious chanson—] The pious chansons were a kind of Christmas carols, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhymes, and sung about the streets by the common people when they went at that season to solicit alms. Hamlet is here repeating some scraps from a song of this kind, and when Polonius enquires what follows them, he refers him to the first row (i. e. division) of one of these, to obtain the information he wanted.—STEEVENS.

^m —my abridgment—] He calls the players afterwards the brief chronicles

Enter Four or Five Players.

You are welcome, masters ; welcome all :—I am glad to see thee well :—welcome, good friends.—O, old friend ! why, thy face is valancedⁿ since I saw thee last ; Com'st thou to beard me^o in Denmark ?—What ! my young lady and mistress ! By'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.^p Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.^q—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see : We'll have a speech straight : Come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play.* What speech my lord ?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once : for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare^r to the general :^s but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgments, in such matters, cried in the top of mine,^t) an excellent play ; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no salts in the lines,^u to make the matter savoury ; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection ;^x but called it, an honest^y method, as

of the times ; but I think he now means only those who will shorten my talk.—JOHNSON.

ⁿ — *thy face is valanced*—] i. e. Fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed.—MALONE.

^o — *to beard*—] i. e. *To set at defiance.*

^p — *a chopine.*] A *chioppine* is a high shoe, or rather, a clog, worn by the Italians.—STEEVENS.

^q — *cracked within the ring.*] Flawed so as to destroy its value. There is here a play upon the word *ring* ; a piece of *cracked* metal will not *ring* or *sound*, in the same manner as a *cracked* voice loses its tone. The words, it must be remembered, are addressed to a boy who played female parts.

^r — *caviare*—] i. e. The spawn of a kind of sturgeon, pickled, salted, and dried. In the time of Shakspeare it was a new and fashionable delicacy, not obtained or relished by the vulgar, and therefore used by him to signify any thing above their comprehension.—NARES.

^s — *the general* :] i. e. *The multitude.*

^t — *cried in the top of mine,*)] *Were higher than mine.*—JOHNSON.

^u — *salts in the lines.*] The old copy *sallets*, which is a kin to nonsense. The emendation of the text was made by Pope, and is approved by Gifford, *Ben Jonson*, vol. viii. 177.

^x — *indite the author of affection* :] i. e. Convict the author of being a fantastical affected writer.—STEEVENS.

^y — *honest*—] i. e. *Chaste.*

wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;—

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,—'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

*The rugged Pyrrhus,²—he, whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules;^a horridly trick'd^b
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons;
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder: Roasted in wrath, and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks;—So proceed you.*

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent, and good discretion.

1 Play. *Anon he finds him*

*Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command: Unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage, strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top*

² *The rugged Pyrrhus,—*] It has been the subject of much controversy among the critics, whether this speech was borrowed from Shakspeare himself or from others, and whether, in the praise of the piece of which it is supposed to be a part, he was speaking seriously, or merely meant to ridicule the tragical bombast of his contemporaries. It never occurred to them that this speech must not be judged of by itself, but in connexion with the place where it is introduced. To distinguish it as dramatic poetry in the play itself, it was necessary that it should rise above the dignified poetry of that, in the same proportion that theatrical elevation does above simple nature. Hence Shakspeare composed the play in Hamlet altogether in sententious rhymes full of antithesis. But this solemn and measured tone did not suit a speech in which violent emotion ought to prevail; and the poet had no other expedient than the one of which he made use, overcharging the pathos.—SCHLEGEL.

^a — *gules*;] i. e. *Red*. The term is heraldick.

^b — *trick'd*—] i. e. *Smeared, painted*. An heraldick term.

*Stoops to his base ; and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for, lo ! his sword
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick :
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood ;
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.*

*But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack^c stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death : anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region : So, after Pyrrhus' pause,
A roused vengeance sets him new a work :
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof enterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.—*

*Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All ye gods,
In general synod take away her power ;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends !*

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.—Pr'y-thee, say on :—He's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps :—say on : come to Hecuba.

1 Play. *But who, ah woe ! had seen the mobled^e queen——*

Ham. The mobled queen ?

Pol. That's good ; mobled queen is good.

1 Play. *Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the
flames*

*With bisson^f rheum ; a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem stood ; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;*

^c — rack—] i. e. A moving body of clouds.—NARES.

^d — a jig,] i. e. A ludicrous metrical composition.

^e — mobled—] i. e. Veiled.

^f — bisson—] i. e. Blind. A word still in use in some parts of the north of England.—STEEVENS.

*Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
 'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd:
 But if the gods themselves did see her then,
 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs;
 The instant burst of clamour that she made,
 (Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
 Would have made milch^s the burning eye of heaven,
 And passion in the gods.*

Pol. Look, whether he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes.—Pr'ythee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time: After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. Odd's bodikin, man, much better: Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping! Use them after your own honour and dignity: The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

[*Exit* POLONIUS, *with some of the*
Players.]

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.—Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?

Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1 Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well.—Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit Player.*] My good friends, [*to Ros. and GUIL.*] I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

^s — milch—] i. e. Mild, tender-hearted.—TODD.

Ros. Good my lord !

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' you:—Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I !

Is it not monstrous, that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit,

That from her working, all his visage wann'd;^h

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit ? And all for nothing !

For Hecuba !

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her ? What would he do,

Had he the motive and the cueⁱ for passion,

That I have ? He would drown the stage with tears,

And cleave the general ear^j with horrid speech ;

Made mad the guilty, and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant ; and amaze, indeed,

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,

Like John a-dreams,^k unpregnant^l of my cause,

And can say nothing ; no, not for a king,

Upon whose property, and most dear life,

A damn'd defeat^m was made. Am I a coward ?

Who calls me villain ? breaks my pate across ?

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face ?

Tweaks me by the nose ? gives me the lie i'the throat,

As deep as to the lungs ? Who does me this ?

Ha !

Why, I should take it : for it cannot be,

But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall

^h — wann'd ;] i. e. Turned pale.

ⁱ — the cue—] i. e. The hint, the direction. This phrase is theatrical, and occurs at least a dozen times in our author's plays.—JOHNSON and STEEVENS.

^j — the general ear—] i. e. The ear of all mankind.

^k John-a-dreams,] A name apparently coined to suit a dreaming stupid character, quasi, "dreaming John."—NARES.

^l — unpregnant—] i. e. Having no due sense of.—WARBURTON.

^m — defeat—] i. e. Destruction.

To make oppression bitter ; or, ere this,
 I should have fatt'd all the region kites
 With this slave's offal : Bloody, bawdy villain !
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindlessⁿ villain !
 Why, what an ass am I ? This is most brave ;
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
 A scullion !
 Fye upon't ! foh ! About my brains !^o Humph ! I have
 heard,
 That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
 Have by the very cunning of the scene
 Been struck so to the soul, that presently
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions ;
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 Play something like the murder of my father,
 Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ;
 I'll tent him^p to the quick ; if he do blench,^q
 I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,
 May be a devil : and the devil hath power
 To assume a pleasing shape : yea, and, perhaps,
 Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
 (As he is very potent with such spirits,)
 Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds
 More relative^r than this : The play's the thing,
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit.

ⁿ — kindless—] Unnatural.

^o — About my brains!] Wits, to your work. Brain, go about the present business.—JOHNSON.

^p — tent him—] Search his wounds.—JOHNSON.

^q — blench,] i. e. Shrink, or start.

^r — More relative,] i. e. More nearly related, closely connected.—JOHNSON.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Castle.*

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you, by no drift of conference
Get from him, why he puts on this confusion;
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
But with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught^s on the way; of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: They are about the court;
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties,
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

^s — o'er-raught—] Over-reached, over-took.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too :

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither ;

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront^t Ophelia :

Her father, and myself (lawful espials,)^u

Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge ;

And gather by him, as he is behav'd,

If't be the affliction of his love or no,

That thus he suffers for.

Queen.

I shall obey you :

And, for your part, Ophelia I do wish,

That your good beauties be the happy cause

Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope, your virtues

Will bring him to his wonted way again,

To both your honours.

Oph.

Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit* Queen.

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here :—Gracious, so please you,

We will bestow ourselves :—Read on this book ;

[*To* OPHELIA.

That show of such an exercise may colour

Your loneliness.—We are oft to blame in this,—

'Tis too much prov'd,^x that, with devotion's visage,

And pious action, we do sugar o'er

The devil himself.

King.

O, 'tis too true ! how smart

A lash that speech doth give my conscience !

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,^y

Than is my deed to my most painted word :

O heavy burden !

[*Aside.*

^t *Affront*—] i. e. Meet directly, encounter.

^u — *espials*,)] i. e. Spies.

^x 'Tis too much prov'd,] It is found by too frequent experience.—JOHNSON.

^y — more ugly to the thing that helps it,] That is, compared with the thing that helps it.—JOHNSON.

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and POLONIUS.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question :—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them?—To die,—to sleep,—
No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ake, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die;—to sleep;—
To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,^y
Must give us pause: There's the respect,^z
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus^a make
With a bare bodkin?^b who would fardels^c bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life;
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will;
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprizes of great pith and moment,

^y — coil,] i. e. *Obstruction*.—NARES.

^z — the respect,] i. e. *The consideration*.

^a — quietus—] The official discharge of an account; from the Latin.
Here used metaphorically.—NARES.

^b — bodkin?] The ancient name for a small dagger.—STEEVENS.

^c — fardels—] i. e. *Burthens*.

With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now!
The fair Ophelia:—Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,

How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham.

Not, not I;

wants to play

I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well, you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

*Simple
straight forward*

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest, and fair, your beauty
should admit no discourse to your honesty.^d

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce
than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the
force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness;^e
this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it
proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me: for virtue can-
not so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it:
I loved you not.

^d — your beauty should admit no discourse to your honesty.] The reading of the quarto, 1603: the folio reads, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

^e — into his likeness;] The modern editors read its likeness; but the text is right. Shakspeare and his contemporaries frequently use the personal for the neutral pronoun.—MALONE.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery; Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,^f imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in: What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven! We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us: Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry; Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery; farewell: Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. Heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance:^g Go to, I'll no more of't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit HAMLET.^h

^f — thoughts to put them in,] To put a thing into thought, is to think on it.—JOHNSON.

^g — make your wantonness your ignorance:] You mistake by wanton affection, and pretend to mistake by ignorance.—JOHNSON.

^h Exit Hamlet.] The severity displayed by Hamlet to Ophelia in this scene has been the occasion of much discussion. It appears to me that on first perceiving her, he approaches her with gentleness and affection, "Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered."—On her returning his gifts, he begins to suspect, that like his school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, she is also an emissary of the king, and confederated against him. Perhaps, by an accidental glance of the eye, he discovers where the king and Polonius are watching the event of the interview; and assumes a severity of manner not only to deceive them, but in punishment of the treachery of Ophelia. The hint

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
 The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword :
 The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
 The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,¹
 The observ'd of all observers ! quite, quite down !
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
 That suck'd the honey of his musick vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh ;
 That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth,
 Blasted with ecstasy :^k O, woe is me !
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend ;
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
 And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,¹
 Will be some danger : Which for to prevent,
 I have, in quick determination,
 Thus set it down ; He shall with speed to England,
 For the demand of our neglected tribute :
 Haply, the seas, and countries different,
 With variable objects, shall expel
 This something-settled matter in his heart ;
 Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
 From fashion of himself. What think you on't ?

Pol. It shall do well ; but yet I do believe,
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia ?
 You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said ;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please ;

of Ophelia's character is taken from a young woman, mentioned by Saxo Grammaticus, who was employed to betray Hamlet.

ⁱ — the mould of form,] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves.—JOHNSON.

^k — with ecstasy:] The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to signify some degree of alienation of mind.—STEEVENS.

¹ — disclose,] This is a technical term in falconry ; and is when the young just peeps through the shell.—STEEVENS.

But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
 Let his queen-mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief; let her be round with him;
 And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference: If she find him not,
 To England send him: or confine him, where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so:
 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Hall in the same.

Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.

Ham. Speak the speech I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus: but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings;^m who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise; I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant;ⁿ it out-herods Herod:^o Pray you, avoid it.

1 Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own dis-

^m — groundlings;] Spectators in the pit of the theatre, which was in our author's days called the *ground*, and their places *ground-stands*.—NARES.

ⁿ — Termagant;] From the Italian *Trivigante*, or *Tervagant* of the French romances. This *Trivigante* is derived by a learned Italian from *Diana Trivia*, whose lunar sacrifices, he says, were always preserved among the Scythians. The crusaders, and those who celebrated them, confounded Mahometans with Pagans, and supposed Mahomet or Mahoud to be one of their deities, and *Tervagant* or *Termagant* another. This imaginary personage was introduced into our old plays and moralities, and represented as of a most violent character; so that a ranting actor might always appear to advantage in it.—NARES' Glossary.

^o — out-herod's Herod:] The character of *Herod*, in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent one.—STEEVENS.

cretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, ~~that~~ you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure.^p Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure^q of which one, must, in your allowance, o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play,—and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man,^s have so strutted, and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1 *Play.* I hope, we have reformed that indifferently with us.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them:^t for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it." Go, make you ready. [*Exeunt Players.*]

^p — pressure.] Resemblance as in a print.—JOHNSON.

^q — censure—] i. e. Judgment, opinion.

^s — nor man,] The folio reads, "or Norman;" Dr. Farmer proposes, "or Musselman."

^t — speak no more than is set down for them:] The clown very often addressed the audience in the middle of the play, and entered into a contest of raillery and sarcasm with such of the audience as chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shakspeare alludes.—MALONE.

^u In the first quarto edition of this play, which has recently been discovered, Hamlet here adds, "And then you have some again, that keep one suit of jests, as a man is known by one suit of apparel, and gentlemen quote his jests down in their tables before they come to the play, as thus: 'Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?' and, 'You owe me a quarter's wages:' and, 'My coat wants a cullison:' and, 'Your beer is sour:' and blabbering with his lips, and thus keeping in his cinkapace of jests, when God knows the warm clown cannot make a jest unless by chance, as the blind man catcheth a hare; masters, tell him of it."

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord? will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste.—[*Exit* POLONIUS.
Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. Ay, my lord.

[*Ereunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ham. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. O, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter:
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flat-
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp; [ter'd?
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,^x
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those,
Whose blood and judgment^y are so well co-mingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please: Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance,

* — the pregnant hinges of the knee,] I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place, is, *quick, ready, prompt*.—JOHNSON.

^y *Whose blood and judgment*—] According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgment* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character.—JOHNSON.

Which I have told thee of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.² Give him heedful note:
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;
 And, after, we will both our judgments join
 In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord:
 If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
 And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle:
 Get you a place.

Danish March. A Flourish. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith; of the camelion's dish: I eat
 the air, promise-crammed: You cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these
 words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now.² My lord,—you played once
 in the university, you say? [*To Polonius.*]

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good
 actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i'the
 Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so capital a
 calf there.—Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

² ——— *stithy.*] The shop containing the *stith* or anvil, now called *smithy*.—
 NARES.

² ——— *nor mine now.*] A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no
 longer than he keeps them unspoken.—JOHNSON.

Pol. O ho! do you mark that? [To the King.

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[Lying down at OPHELIA's Feet.

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think, I meant country matters? humiliates

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maid's legs. her

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O! your only jig-maker.^b What should a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.^c O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r-lady, he must build churches then: or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse:^d whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

Trumpets sound. The dumb Show^e follows.

Enter a King and Queen, very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers;

^b — jig-maker.] i. e. *Ballad-maker*. A jig was a low, ludicrous dialogue in metre.

^c — a suit of sables.] The richest dress that could be worn in Denmark.—STEEVENS.

^d — suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse:] Amongst the country May-games, there was a hobby-horse, which, when the puritanical humour of those times opposed and discredited these games, was brought by the poets and ballad-makers as an instance of the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries; from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two.—WARBURTON.

^e *The dumb-show*—] This was in the old plays a very common part of the performance; "they gradually," says Nares, "fell into disrepute, by the improvement of taste; so that in Shakspeare's time they seem to have been in favour only with the lower classes of spectators."

she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but, in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho;^f it means mischief.

Oph. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: Be not you ashamed to show,^g he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught; I'll mark the play.

Pro. *For us, and for our tragedy.*

Here stooping to your clemency,

We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart^h gone Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground; [round And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,ⁱ About the world have times twelve thirties been;

^f — *miching mallecho*;] i. e. *A skulking mischief*, from *to mich* to lie hid, or skulk in a corner, and *malheco*, Spanish, an evil action.—MALONE.

^g — *Be not you ashamed to show*, &c.] The conversation of Hamlet with Ophelia, which cannot fail to disgust every modern reader, is probably such as was peculiar to the young and fashionable of the age of Shakspeare, which was, by no means, the age of delicacy.—STEEVENS.

^h — *cart*—] A chariot was anciently so called.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ — *sheen*,] Splendour, lustre.—JOHNSON.

Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er, ere love be done!

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:

For women fear too much, even as they love;^k

And women's fear and love hold quantity;

In neither aught, or in extremity.

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;

And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.

Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;

Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly
too;

My operant powers^l their functions leave to do:

And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,

Honour'd, belov'd; and, haply, one as kind

For husband shalt thou——

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!

Such love must needs be treason in my breast:

In second husband let me be accurst!

None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

Ham. That's wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances,^m that second marriage move,

Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;

A second time I kill my husband dead,

When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe, you think what now you speak;

But, what we do determine, oft we break.

Purpose is but the slave to memory;

Of violent birth, but poor validity:

Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;

But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.

^k For women fear too much, even as they love;] This line is omitted in the folio,
—which gives the next line thus:

“For women's fear and love hold quantity.”—STEEVENS.

^l — operant—] i. e. Active.

^m The instances,] i. e. The motives.

Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :^a
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
 The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures^o with themselves destroy :
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
 This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
 The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
 The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
 For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
 Directly seasons him his enemy.
 But, orderly to end where I begun,—
 Our wills, and fates, do so contráry run,
 That our devices still are overthrown ;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
 But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.
P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light !
 Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night !
 To desperation turn my trust and hope !
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !^p
 Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
 Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
 Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

Ham. If she should break it now,—— [To OPHELIA.]

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while ;

^a — *what to ourselves is debt :*] The performance of a resolution, in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself which he may therefore remit at pleasure.—JOHNSON.

^o — *enactures*—] i. e. *Effects*.—NARES.

^p *An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !*] May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on hermit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret*.—JOHNSON. This abbreviation of the word is very ancient.—STEEVENS.

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [Exit.

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i'the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The mouse-trap.^a Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder, done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: But what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.—

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.^r

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you mistake your husbands.^s—Begin, murderer;—leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come;—
——The croaking raven

Doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;

^a *The mouse-trap.*] He calls it the *mouse-trap*, because it is—
“————— the thing

In which he'll catch the conscience of the king.”—STEEVENS.

^r *I could interpret, &c.*] This refers to the interpreter, who formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet-shows, and interpreted to the audience.—STEEVENS.

^s *So you mistake your husbands,*] i. e. So you do amiss in taking your husbands for worse; you should take them for better only.—TOLLET.

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
 With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
 Thy natural magick and dire property,
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the Poison into the Sleeper's Ears.*]

Ham. He poisons him i'the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian: You shall see anon, how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What! frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light:—away!

Pol. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play:

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away.—

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers; (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk^t with me,) with two Provencial roses on my razed shoes,^u get me a fellowship in a cry of players,^x sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.^x

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,^y

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—peacock.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

^t — turn Turk with me,)] This means to change condition fantastically.—STEEVENS.

^u — razed shoes,] i. e. Slashed shoes.

^x — a cry of players,] A pack of hounds was once called a cry of hounds.—STEEVENS.

^y *Ham. A whole one, I.*] The actors in our author's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or house-keepers, as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit.—MALONE.

^y — O Damon dear,] Hamlet calls Horatio by this name, in allusion to the celebrated friendship between Damon and Pythias.—STEEVENS.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning,—

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha!—Come, some musick; come, the recorders.—

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike,^z—he likes it not, perdy.^a

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some musick.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir:—pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon, and my return, shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's dis-

^z *Why then, belike,*] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered.—JOHNSON.

^a — *perdy.*] The corruption of *par Dieu*, and is not uncommon in the old plays.—STEEVENS.

eased: But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: My mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says; Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! —But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in your closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade^c with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.^d

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, but bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but, *While the grass grows*,—the proverb is something musty.^e

Enter the Players, with Recorders.^f

O, the recorders:—let me see one.—To withdraw with you: [*taking Guildenstern aside.^g*]—Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

^c — further trade—] Further business; further dealing.—JOHNSON.

^d — by these pickers, &c.] By these hands.—JOHNSON.

^e — the proverb is something musty.] The remainder of this old proverb is—

“While grass doth growe, the silly horse he starves.”

Hamlet means to intimate, that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death.—MALONE.

^f — Recorders.] i. e. A kind of large flute. To record, anciently signified to sing or modulate.—STEEVENS.

^g — [*taking Guildenstern aside.*] This stage direction was inserted by Mr. Malone.

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages^h with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much musick, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood, do you think, I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks, it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or, like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by.—They fool me to the top of my bent.ⁱ—I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

Ham. By and by is easily said.—Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.*

^h — ventages—] The holes of a flute.

ⁱ — They fool me to the top of my bent.] i. e. As far as the bow will admit of being bent without breaking.—DOUCE.

'Tis now the very witching time of night ;
 When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
 Contagion to this world : Now could I drink hot blood,
 And do such business as the bitter day
 Would quake to look on. Soft ; now to my mother.—
 O, heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites :
 How in my words soever she be shent,^k
 To give them seals^l never, my soul, consent !

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*A Room in the same.**Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

King. I like him not ; nor stands it safe with us,
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you ;
 I your commission will forthwith despatch,
 And he to England shall along with you :
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunes.^m

Guil. We will ourselves provide :
 Most holy and religious fear it is,
 To keep those many many bodies safe,
 That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,
 To keep itself from 'noyance ; but much more
 That spirit, upon whose weal depend and rest
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty
 Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it, with it : it is a massy wheel,

^k — be shent,] i. e. Reproved harshly.

^l To give them seals—] i. e. Put them in execution.—WARBURTON.

^m Out of his lunes.] i. e. His madness, frenzy.

Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the bois'trous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. Guil.

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,^a
To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him home:
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage.^o Fare you well, my liege:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

*will
inform
King*

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;^p
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?

^a *Behind the arras I'll convey myself,*] The arras hangings in Shakspeare's time, were hung at such a distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind them unperceived.—MALONE.

^o *— of vantage.*] By some opportunity of secret observation.—WARBURTON.

^p *Though inclination be as sharp as will;*] What the king means to say, is, "That though he was not only *willing* to pray, but strongly *inclined* to it, yet his intention was defeated by his guilt.—M. MASON.

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
 But to confront the visage of offence?
 And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—
 To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
 Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?^a
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 Try what repentance can: What can it not?
 Yet what can it, when one can not repent?^r
 O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
 O limed^s soul; that struggling to be free,
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!
 Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;
 All may be well! [Retires, and kneels.]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;
 And now I'll do't;—and so he goes to heaven:
 And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd:^t

^a *May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?*] He that does not amend what can be amended, retains his offence. The king kept the crown from the right heir.—JOHNSON.

^r *Yet what can it, when one can not repent?*] *What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent*, for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment?—JOHNSON.

^s — *limed*,] i. e. *Entangled*. The allusion is to bird-lime.—STEEVENS.

^t — *That would be scann'd*:] i. e. That should be considered, estimated.—STEEVENS.

A villain kills my father ; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread ;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;
And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven ?
But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him : And am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?
No.

Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent :
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage ;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed ;
At gaming, swearing ; or about some act
That has no relish for salvation in't :
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven :
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes.* My mother stays ;
This physick but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit.

The King rises, and advances.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :
Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter Queen and POLONIUS.

Pol. He will come straight. Look, you lay home to him :
Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with ;
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between

^u — hent,] i. e. Hold, opportunity.—Nares.

^x As hell, whereto it goes.] This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered.—Johnson.

This speech of Hamlet's, as Johnson observes, is horrible indeed ; yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent calamities were owing to this savage refinement of revenge.—M. Mason.

does
same
with
Queen

Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.^y
 Pray you, be round with him.

Queen. I'll warrant you;
 Fear me not:—withdraw, I hear him coming.

[POLONIUS *hides himself*.^z

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother; what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
 And,—'would it were not so!—you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not
 budge;

You go not, till I set you up a glass
 Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
 Help, help, ho!

Pol. [*behind*.] What, ho! help!

Ham. How now! a rat?

[*Draws*.

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[HAMLET *makes a pass through the Arras*.

Pol. [*behind*.] O, I am slain.

[*Falls, and dies*.

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not:

Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the Arras, and draws forth* POLONIUS.

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

^y ——— I'll silence me e'en here.] i. e. I'll use no more words.—JOHNSON.

^z Polonius *hides himself*.] The concealment of Polonius, and the manner of his death, is from the *History of Hamlet*, bl. l. sig. D. l.—MALONE.

Ham. A bloody deed ;—almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king !

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell !

[*To POLONIUS.*

I took thee for thy better ; take thy fortune :
Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger.—
Leave wringing of your hands : Peace ; sit you down,
And let me wring your heart : for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff ;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy
tongue
In noise so rude against me ?

Ham. Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty ;
Calls virtue, hypocrite ; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there ;^a makes marriage vows
As false as dicer's oaths : O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction^b plucks
The very soul ; and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words : Heaven's face doth glow ;
Yea, this solidity, and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index ?^c

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this ;
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow :

^a — takes off the rose

[*From the fair forehead, &c.*] In allusion to the ancient custom for those who were betrothed, to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement. In the *morrice-dance* depicted on Mr. Toller's window, one of the figures has a flower fixed on the forehead, and seems to be meant for the paramour of the female character.—STEEVENS.

^b — contraction—] For marriage contract.—WARBURTON.

^c — index?—] is here used in one of its least common senses, as a preparatory sketch in dumb show, prefixed to the act of a play.—NARES.

Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
 A station^d like the herald Mercury,
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
 A combination, and a form, indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,
 To give the world assurance of a man:
 This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows:
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten^e on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
 You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,
 The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgment; And what judgment
 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
 Else, could you not have motion:^f But, sure, that sense
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?^g
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.^h
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutineⁱ in a matron's bones,
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame,
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;

^d — station—] This word does not here mean *the spot where any one is placed*, but *the act of standing*.—STEEVENS.

^e — batten—] i. e. Grow fat. *Bat* is an ancient word for *increase*.—STEEVENS.

^f — Sense, sure, you have,

Else could you not have motion:] *Sense* is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or sensual appetite: as *motion* is the effect produced by the impulse of nature.—MALONE.

^g — hoodman-blind?] i. e. Blindman's-buff.—NARES.

^h *Could not so mope.*] i. e. Could not exhibit such marks of stupidity.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ — mutine—] An ancient term, signifying to rise in *mutiny*.—MALONE.

Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more :
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
And there I see such black and grained^k spots,
As will not leave^l their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an incestuous^m bed ;
Stew'd in corruption ; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty sty ;—

Queen. O, speak to me no more ;
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears ;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A murderer, and a villain :
A slave, that is not twentieth part of the tythe
Of your precedent lord :—a vice of kings :^o
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule ;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket !

Queen. No more.

Enter Ghost.

Ham. A king
Of shreds and patches :—^p
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards !—What would your gracious figure ?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion,^q let's go by
The important acting of your dread command ?
O, say !

Ghost. Do not forget : This visitation

^k — grained—] Died in grain.—JOHNSON.

^l — leave—] i.e. Resign, give up.—STEEVENS.

^m — incestuous—] This is the reading of the quarto, 1611, and I have adopted it, instead of following the gross text of the folio, which gives *en-seamed*, i.e. *fat, greasy*.

^o — vice of kings :] A low mimick of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce ; from whence the modern *punch* is descended.—JOHNSON.

^p — A king

Of shreds and patches :—] This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of kings*. The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches.—JOHNSON.

^q — laps'd in time and passion,] That, having suffer'd time to slip, and passion to cool, let's go, &c.—JOHNSON.

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But, look ! amazement on thy mother sits :
 O, step between her and her fighting soul ;
 Conceit^r in weakest bodies strongest works :
 Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you?

That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
 And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
 And as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,^s
 Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son,
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look ?

Ham. On him ! on him !—Look you, how pale he glares !
 His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable.^t—Do not look upon me ;
 Lest, with this piteous action, you convert
 My stern effects :^u then what I have to do
 Will want true colour ; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this ?

Ham. Do you see nothing there ?

Queen. Nothing at all ; yet all, that is, I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing, but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there ! look, how it steals away !
 My father, in his habit as he liv'd !^x
 Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal !

[*Exit Ghost.*

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain :
 This bodiless creation ecstasy^y
 Is very cunning in.

^r Conceit—] i. e. *Imagination*.

^s — excrements,] From *exresco*. Every thing that appears to vegetate or grow upon the human body ; as the hair, the beard, the nails.—NARES' *Glossary*.

^t — capable,]—here signifies *intelligent* ; endued with understanding.—

MALONE.

^u — effects:] i. e. *Actions* ; deeds effected.—MALONE.

^x — in his habit as he liv'd !] i. e. In the dress he wore while alive.—

GIFFORD'S *Ben Jonson*, vol. viii. p. 75.

^y — ecstasy—] i. e. A temporary alienation of mind.—STEEVENS.

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
 And makes as healthful musick : It is not madness,
 That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,
 And I the matter will re-word ; which madness
 Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
 Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
 That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks :
 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place ;
 Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;
 Repent what's past : avoid what is to come ;
 And do not spread the compost^z on the weeds,
 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue :
 For in the fatness of these pursy times,
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg ;
 Yea, curb^a and woo, for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet ! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O throw away the worser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night : but go not to my uncle's bed ;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
 That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
 Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this ;
 That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
 That aptly is put on : Refrain to-night :
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence : the next more easy :
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either curb the devil, or throw him out
 With wond'rous potency. Once more, good night ;
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,
[Pointing to POLONIUS.]
 I do repent : but heaven hath pleas'd it so,—

^z — do not spread the compost, &c.] Do not, by any new indulgence, heighten your former offences.—JOHNSON.

^a — curb—] That is, bend and truckle ; Fr. *courber*.—STEEVENS.

To punish me with this, and this with me,^b
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night!
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
 But one word more, good lady.

Queen.

What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king^c tempt you again to bed;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse:^d
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know:
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock,^e from a bat, a gib,^f
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly;^g and, like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions,^h in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen.

Alack,

I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

^b *To punish me with this, and this with me,*] To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand.—MALONE.

^c *Let the bloat king—*] This again hints at his intemperance. He had already drank himself into a dropsy.—BLACKSTONE.

^d *—his mouse;*] This term of endearment is very ancient.—MALONE.

^e *—paddock,*] i. e. *A toad.* The word was used by Dryden, and probably not since.—NARES.

^f *—a gib,*] A common name for a cat.—STEEVENS.

^g *Unpeg the basket on the house's top,*

Let the birds fly;] Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, may possibly allude to the same story: "It is the story of the *Jackanapes* and the partridges; thou starest after a beauty till it be lost to thee, and then let'st out another, and starest after that till it is gone too."—WARNER.

^h *To try conclusions,*] i. e. *Make experiments.*

Ham. There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows,—

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd,ⁱ—

They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,

And marshal me to knavery: Let it work;

For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

Hoist^k with his own petar: and it shall go hard,

But I will delve one yard below their mines,

And blow them at the moon: O, tis most sweet,

When in one line two crafts directly meet.^l—

This man shall set me packing.

I'll lug the guts^m into the neighbour room:—

Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor

Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,

Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you:°

Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally*; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.]

ACT IV.°

SCENE I.—*The same.*

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves;

ⁱ — *adders fang'd*—] That is, adders with their fangs or poisonous teeth, undrawn.—JOHNSON.

^k *Hoist*, &c.] *Hoist* for hoised; as *past* for passed.

^l *When in one line two crafts directly meet.*—] Still alluding to a countermining.—MALONE.

^m — *the guts*—] This word was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present; but was used by Lyly (who made the first attempt to polish our language) in his serious compositions. “Could not the treasure of Phrygia, nor the tributes of Greece, nor mountains in the east, whose guts are gold, satisfy thy mind?” *Mydas*. 1592.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ *Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you:*] Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the ghost, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence.—STEEVENS.

^o *Act IV.*] This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes.—JOHNSON.

You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them:
Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.—

[*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN,*
who go out.

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier: In this lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, and cries, *A rat! a rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. ————— O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,^p
This mad young man: but, so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where he is gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,
Among a mineral^q of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O, Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,

^p — out of haunt,] i. e. Out of company.

^q — a mineral—] i. e. A mine.

And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go, seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander,—
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,^r
Transports his poison'd shot,—may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air.—O come away!
My soul is full of discord, and dismay. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. —Safely stowed,—[*ROSEN. &c. within.* Hamlet! lord Hamlet!]
But soft,—what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own.
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—what replication
should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,
his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king
best service in the end: He keeps them, like an ape,^s in
the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed:

^r — blank,] i. e. The white mark in the centre of the target.

^s — like an ape,] i. e. As an ape does an apple.—RITSON.

When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing——

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing:^t bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after."
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body. How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose? Yet must not we put the strong law on him: He's lov'd of the distracted multitude, Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd, But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown, By desperate appliance are reliev'd.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not at all.—How now? what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord, We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

^t *Of nothing:*] Should it not be, *Or nothing?* When the courtiers remark that Hamlet has contemptuously called the king *a thing*, Hamlet defends himself by observing, that the king must be *a thing* or *nothing*.—JOHNSON.

^u — *Hide fox, &c.*] There is a play among children, called *Hide fox, and all after*.—HANMER.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper? where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politick worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress^v through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*]

Ham. He will stay till you come. [*Exeunt Attendants.*]

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: Therefore, prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,^x
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

^v — go a progress—] Alluding to the royal journeys of state, always styled progresses; a familiar idea to those who, like our author, lived during the reigns of queen Elizabeth and king James I.—STEEVENS.

^x — at help,] i. e. At hand, ready to assist you.—RITSON.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub, that sees them.—But, come ; for England !—Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother : Father and mother is man and wife ; man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother. Come, for England. [Exit.

King. Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed aboard ; Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night :

Away ; for every thing is seal'd and done

That else leans on the affair : Pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUIL-

DENSTERN.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
(As my great power thereof may give thee sense ;
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set
Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;
For like the hectick in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me : Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps,² my joys will ne'er begin. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

A Plain in Denmark.

Enter FORTINBRAS, *and Forces, marching.*

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;
Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,^a
And let him know so.

¹ — set—] i. e. *Value, estimate.*

² *Howe'er my haps,*] i. e. *Whatever befall me.*

^a — in his eye,] i. e. *In his presence.* The phrase appears to have been
formularily.—STEEVENS.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on. [*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.*]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir,

I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who

Commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,

Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,

We go to gain a little patch of ground,

That hath in it no profit but the name.

To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;

Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,

A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw:

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without

Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi'you, sir. [*Exit Captain.*]

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little before.

[*Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.*]

How all occasions do inform against me,

And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,

If his chief good, and market^b of his time,

Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.

Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,^c

^b — market—] i. e. Profit.

^c — large discourse,] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future.—JOHNSON.

Looking before, and after, gave us not
 That capability and godlike reason
 To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven^d scruple
 Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
 A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
 And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know
 Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do* ;
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
 To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me :
 Witness, this army of such mass, and charge,
 Led by a delicate and tender prince ;
 Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
 Makes mouths at the invisible event ;
 Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
 To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
Is, not to stir without great argument ;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason, and my blood,
 And let all sleep ? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds ; fight for a plot^e
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent,^f
 To hide the slain ?—O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth ! [Exit.

^d — craven—] i. e. Cowardly.

^e — a plot—] i. e. A piece, or portion.

^f — continent,] Continent, in our author, means that which comprehends or encloses.

SCENE V.

Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle.**Enter Queen and HORATIO.**Queen.* — I will not speak with her.*Hor.* She is importunate; indeed, distract;
Her mood will needs be pitied.*Queen.*

What would she have?

Hor. She speaks much of her father; says, she hears,
There's tricks i'the world; and hems, and beats her
heart;Spurns enviously^g at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,

Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection;^h they aimⁱ at it,

And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,

Indeed would make one think, there might be thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.^k*Queen.* 'Twere good, she were spoken with; for she
may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:

Let her come in.

[*Exit HORATIO.*]

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

*Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.*¹*Oph.* Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?*Queen.* How now, Ophelia?^g — *enviously*—] i. e. *Angrily, indignantly.*—NARES. Envy is much oftener put by our poet (and those of his time) for direct *aversion*, than for *malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness.*—STEEVENS.^h — *to collection*;] i. e. *To endeavour to collect some meaning from them.*—M. MASON.ⁱ — *aim*—] i. e. *Guess.*^k — *unhappily.*] i. e. *Mischievously.*¹ The stage direction of the quarto, 1603, is, "Enter Ophelia, playing on a lute, and her haire down, singing."

Oph. *How should I your true love know^m
From another one?*

*By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.ⁿ*

[Singing.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,

[Sings.

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia,—

Oph.

Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow, [Sings.

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. *Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true-love showers.*

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God'ield you!^o They say, the owl was a baker's daughter.^p Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

^m *How should I your true love, &c.*] There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage, more pathetick than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes.

A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize.—Sir J. REYNOLDS.

ⁿ *By his cockle hat and staff,*

And his sandal shoon.] This is the description of a pilgrim. While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation: for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion.—WARBURTON.

^o — *God'ield you!*] i. e. Heaven reward you!

^p — *the owl was a baker's daughter.*] This refers to a story common in Gloucestershire, and is thus related:—"Our Saviour went into a baker's shop

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine:*

*Then up he rose, and don'd^a his clothes,
And dupp'd^r the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

*By Gis,^s and by Saint Charity,^t
Alack, and fye for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock,^u they are to blame.*

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed:*

[He answers.]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient:

where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon, the baker's daughter cried out, 'Heugh, heugh, heugh,' which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour for her wickedness to transform her into that bird." This story is often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people.—DOUCE.

^a — don'd—] i. e. Put on.

^r — dupp'd—] i. e. Open'd. To dup, from to do up; to lift the latch.

^s By Gis,] Doubtless a corrupt abbreviation of, *By Jesus*; but I should imagine rather from the word itself, than, as Dr. Ridley supposes, from the initials I. H. S. inscribed on altars, books, &c.—NARFS' Glossary.

^t — by Saint Charity,] *Saint Charity* is a saint among the Roman Catholics.—STEEVENS.

^u By cock,] This is a corruption of the sacred name.—STEEVENS.

but I cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay him i'the cold ground : My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach ! Good night, ladies ; good night, sweet ladies ; good night, good night. [Exit.

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit HORATIO.

O ! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death : and now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions ! First, her father slain ;
Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove : The people muddled,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death ; and we have done but greenly,^x
In hugger-mugger to inter him :^y Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself, and her fair judgment ;
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France :
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,^z
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering piece,^a in many places
Gives me superfluous death. [A Noise within.

^x — greenly,] i. e. Unskilfully; with greenness; that is, without maturity of judgment.—JOHNSON.

^y In hugger-mugger to inter him:] All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it:

In private to inter him ;—

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove ; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's : if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost ; we shall no longer have the words of any author ; and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning.—JOHNSON.

^z Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,] i. e. In which pestilent speeches, necessity, or the obligation of an accuser to support his charge, will nothing stick, &c.—JOHNSON.

^a Like to a murdering piece,] The small cannon, which are, or were used in the fore-castle, half-deck, or steerage of a ship of war, were within the last century called murdering-pieces.—MALONE.

Queen.

Alack! what noise is this?

Enter a Gentleman.

King. Attend.

Where are my Switzers?^b Let them guard the door:
What is the matter?

Gent.

Save yourself, my lord:

The ocean, overpeering of his list,^c
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers! The rabble call him, lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,^d
They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter,^e you false Danish dogs.

King. The doors are broke.

[*Noise within.*]

Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

Dan. No, let's come in.

Laer.

I pray you, give me leave.

Dan. We will, we will. [*They retire without the Door.*]

Laer. I thank you:—keep the door.—O thou vile
king,

Give me my father.

Queen.

Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood, that's calm, proclaims me
bastard;

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot

^b — *my Switzers?*] In many of our old plays, the guards attendant on kings are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene lies, because the Swiss in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations.—REED and MALONE.

^c — *list,*] i. e. *Boundary.*

^d *The ratifiers and props of every word,*] i. e. Of every word addressed to them by Laertes.

^e *O, this is counter,*] Hounds run *counter* when they trace the trail backwards.
—JOHNSON.

Even here, between the chaste unsmirched^f brow
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd:—Let him go, Gertrude;—
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: To this point I stand,—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world's:
And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,^g
Repay them with my blood.

^f — unsmirched—] i. e. Not defiled.

^g — like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,] In the old play of King Leir, 1605, we find,

“I am as kind as is the pelican

That kills itselfe, to save her young ones' lives.”

It is almost needless to add that this account of the bird is entirely fabulous.
—STEEVENS.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment 'pear,^h
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*within.*] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?

Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dressed with Straws and Flowers.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.ⁱ

Oph. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier;*
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny;
And in his grave rain'd many a tear;—

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing, *Down a-down, an you call him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it!^k It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

^h — 'pear,] For appear.

ⁱ *Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,*

It sends some precious instance of itself

After the thing it loves.] Love (says Laertes) is the passion by which nature is most exalted and refined; and as substances, refined and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and refined, flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves.—JOHNSON.

^k — *how the wheel becomes it!]* *Wheel* is supposed to have been the old word for the burthen of a song. Perhaps it means the musical instrument, which by Chaucer was called a *rote*, by others a *vielle*; and which was played on by the friction of a *wheel*.—STEEVENS and MALONE.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;¹ pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.^m

Laer. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines:ⁿ—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—we may call it, herb of grace o'Sundays:^o—you may wear your rue with a difference.^p—There's a daisy:^q—I would give you some violets;^r but they withered all, when my father died:—They say, he made a good end,—

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,— [Sings.

Laer. Thought^s and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

Oph. *And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.*

¹ *There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;*] Rosemary was anciently supposed to strengthen the memory, and was not only carried at funerals, but worn at weddings.—STEEVENS.

^m — *pansies,*] From *pensées*, Fr. *thoughts*.

ⁿ — *fennel for you and columbines:*] Fennel was regarded as emblematical of flattery; columbines of ingratitude: the reasons for attributing to them these qualities it is no longer possible to discover. Ophelia gives the courtiers *fennel* and *columbines*, “to mark,” says archdeacon Nares, “that though they flattered to get favours, they were *thankless* after receiving them.”

^o — *rue for you, &c.*] *Rue* anciently signified the same as *ruth*, i. e. sorrow. It was called *herb of grace* from its being used in exorcisms against evil spirits.—STEEVENS and NARES.

^p — *you may wear your rue with a difference.*] The slightest variation in the bearings, their position, or colour, constituted a different coat in heraldry; and between the *ruth* and wretchedness of guilt, and the *ruth* and sorrows of misfortune, it would be no difficult matter to distinguish.—*Specimen of a New Edition of Shakspeare*, published by Murray, 1819.

^q — *a daisy:*] This flower signified *deceit*. Green speaks of “the *dissembling daisie*.”

^r — *violets;*] The violet is thus characterized in an old collection of sonnets printed in 1584.

“*Violet is for faithfulness.*”—MALONE.

^s *Thought—*] This word, as in many other places, here signifies *melancholy*.—MALONE.

*His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen^t was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God 'a mercy on his soul!*

And of all christian souls!^u I pray God. God be wi' you!
[Exit OPHELIA.]

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but, if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral,—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,^x
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall;
And, where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [Exeunt.]

^t — *flaxen*—Does not here mean *yellow*, but *white*. "The four colours signify these four virtues. The *flaxy* having *whiteness*, appertains to temperance, because it makes '*candidam et mundam animam*.'" Sir W. Sandys, *Ess.* 1634. p. 16.

^u *God 'a mercy on his soul!*

And of all christian souls!] This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions.—STEEVENS.

^x *No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,*] It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight. This practice is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard (i. e. a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, from whence the term *coat of armour*), are hung over the grave of every knight.—JOHNSON and Sir JOHN HAWKINS.

SCENE VI.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

Hor. What are they, that would speak with me?

Serv.

Sailors, sir;

They say, they have letters for you.

Hor.

Let them come in.—

[*Exit Servant.*]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1 Sail. God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1 Sail. He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [*reads.*] *Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase: Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me; like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter.^y These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.*

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.

^y — [*for the bore of the matter.*] The bore is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. The matter (says Hamlet) would carry heavier words.—
JOHNSON.

Come, I will give you way for these your letters ;
 And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
 To him from whom you brought them. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
 And you must put me in your heart for friend ;
 Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
 That he, which hath your noble father slain,
 Pursu'd my life.

Laer. It well appears :—But tell me,
 Why you proceeded not against these feats,
 So crimeful and so capital in nature,
 As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
 You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons ;
 Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
 But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his mother,
 Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself,
 (My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
 She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
 I could not but by her. The other motive,
 Why to a publick count I might not go,
 Is, the great love the general gender^z bear him :
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
 Work like the spring^a that turneth wood to stone,
 Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,
 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
 Would have reverted to my bow again,
 And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost ;
 A sister driven into desperate terms ;

^z — the general gender—] The common race of the people.—JOHNSON.

^a Work like the spring, &c.] The allusion here is to the quality still ascribed to the dropping-well at Knaresborough in Yorkshire.—REED.

Whose worth, if praises may go back again,^b
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age
 For her perfections:—But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that: you must not
 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull, [think,
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :
 I loved your father, and we love ourself;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—
 How now ? what news ?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
 This to your majesty ; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet ! Who brought them ?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say : I saw them not ;
 They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
 Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them :—
 Leave us. [Exit Messenger.]

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know, I am set naked
 on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your
 kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto,
 recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.*

Hamlet.

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come back ?
 Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ?

Laer. Know you the hand ?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,—*
 And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone* :
 Can you advise me ?

Laer. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come ;
 It warms the very sickness in my heart,
 That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes,

^b — *if praises may go back again,*] If I may praise what has been, but is
 now to be found no more.—JOHNSON.

As how should it be so? how otherwise?—
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,—
As checking at^c his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it,—I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it, accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.^d

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very ribband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his sables, and his weeds,
Importing^e health and graveness.—Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,

^c As checking at,] i. e. Holding back, a term in falconry.

^d Of the unworthiest siege.] Of the lowest rank. *Siege*, for *seat*, *place*.
—JOHNSON.

^e Importing,] i. e. Implying, denoting

That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.^f

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamord,

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you;
And gave you such a masterly report,
For art and exercise in your defence,^g
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you: the scrimers^h of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
Now, out of this,——

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think, you did not love your father;
But that I know, love is begun by time;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.ⁱ
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;

^f — in forgery of shapes and tricks, &c.] I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform.—JOHNSON.

^g — defence,] That is, the science of defence.—JOHNSON.

^h — the scrimers—] The fencers. From *escrimeur*, French, a fencer.—MALONE.

ⁱ — love is begun by time;

And that I see, in passages of proof,

Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.] It is seen in passages of proof, (i. e. in transactions of daily experience,) that love, which is begun and ripened by time, is also qualified, i. e. weakened and diminished by time.

And nothing is at a like goodness still ;
 For goodness, growing to a plurisy,^k
 Dies in his own too-much : That we would do,
 We should do when we would ; for this *would* changes,
 And hath abatements and delays as many
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents :
 And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
 That hurts by easing.^l But, to the quick o'the ulcer :
 Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,
 To show yourself in deed your father's son
 More than in words ?

Laer. To cut his throat i'the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this, keep close within your chamber :
 Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home :
 We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
 And set a double varnish on the fame
 The Frenchman gave you ; bring you, in fine, together,
 And wager o'er your heads : he, being remiss,
 Most generous, and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated,^m and, in a pass of practice,ⁿ
 Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't :
 And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
 I bought an unction of a mountebank,
 So mortal, that but dip a knife in it,
 Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
 Collected from all simples that have virtue
 Under the moon, can save the thing from death,

^k — *plurisy*,] The dramatic writers of Shakspeare's time frequently call a fulness of blood a *plurisy*, as if it came, not from *πλεῦρα*, but from *plus*, *pluris*.—WARBURTON.

^l *And then this should is like a spendthrift sigh,*
That hurts by easing.] A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.—JOHNSON.

^m — *unbated*,] i. e. *Not blunted*, as foils are.—POPE.

ⁿ — *a pass of practice*,] *Practice* is often by Shakspeare, and other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*, a sense not incongruous to this passage.—JOHNSON.

That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape:^p if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof.^q Soft;—let me see:—
We'll make a solemn wager on your connings,—
I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
(As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd him^r
A chalice for the nonce;^s whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,^t
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow:—Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows ascaunt^u the brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,^x

^o *It may be death.*] It is a matter of surprise, that no one of Shakspeare's numerous and able commentators has remarked, with proper warmth and detestation, the villainous assassin-like treachery of Laertes in this horrid plot. There is the more occasion that he should be here pointed out an object of abhorrence, as he is a character we are, in some preceding parts of the play, led to respect and admire.—RITSON.

^p *May fit us to our shape:*] May enable us to assume proper characters, and to act our part.—JOHNSON.

^q *—blast in proof.*] A metaphor taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*.—STEEVENS.

^r *—preferr'd him—*] i. e. *Presented to him.*—MALONE.

^s *—for the nonce;*] i. e. *For the occasion, for this once.*—GIFFORD's *Ben Jonson*, i. iii. p. 218.

^t *—your venom'd stuck,*] i. e. *Your venom'd thrust.* *Stuck* was a term of the fencing-school.—MALONE.

^u *—ascaunt—*] i. e. *Aeross.*—NARES.

^x *—long purples,*] *The orchis mascula.*

That liberal^y shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead-men's fingers call them;
 There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide:
 And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up:
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;
 As one incapable^z of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and indu'd^a
 Unto that element: but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
 Let shame say what it will:—when these are gone,
 The woman will be out.^b—Adieu, my lord!
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
 But that this folly drowns it. [Exit.

King. Let's follow, Gertrude;
 How much I had to do to calm his rage!
 Now fear I, this will give it start again;
 Therefore, let's follow. [Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A Church-yard.

Enter Two Clowns, with Spades, &c.

1 *Clo.* Is she to be buried in christian burial, that will-
 fully seeks her own salvation?

^y — liberal—] *Free spoken, licentious in language.*

^z — incapable—] *i. e. Insensible.*

^a — indu'd—] *In this instance seems to be put for inur'd.—NARES.*

^b *The woman will be out.] i. e. Tears will flow.—MALONE.*

2 *Clo.* I tell thee, she is; therefore make her grave straight:^c the crowner hath set on her, and finds it christian burial.

1 *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

2 *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1. *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:^d Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

2 *Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1 *Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law.

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks shall have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even christian.^e Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digged; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee:

^c — straight:] i. e. Immediately.

^d — an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:] Ridicule on scholastick divisions, without distinction; and of distinctions without difference.—WARBURTON.

^e — their even christian.] An old English expression for fellow-christian. THIRLBY.

if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself——^f

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well: But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill, to say, the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2 *Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating: and when you are asked this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes, last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit* 2 *Clown*.]

1 *Clown* digs, and sings.

In youth, when I did love, did love,^g

Methought, it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove

O, methought, there was nothing meet.

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

^f — confess thyself——] *And be hanged*, the clown I suppose would have said, if he had not been interrupted. This was a common proverbial sentence.—MALONE.

^g *In youth, when I did love, &c.*] The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a slight variation, from a little poem, called *The aged Lover renounceth Love*, written by Henry Howard, earl of Surrey.

The entire song is published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.—THEOBALD and STEEVENS.

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 Clo. *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.^h*

[Throws up a Scull.

Ham. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord Such-a-one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them? ⁱ mine ake to think on't.

1 Clo. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,* [Sings.
For—and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

[Throws up a Scull.

^h Thus in the original:

"For age with stealing steps

"Hath claude me with his crowch;

"And lusty youthe away he leapes,

"As there had beene none such."—STEEVENS.

ⁱ — to play at loggats with them?] This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed into the ground; those who play, throw loggats or pins of wood at it, and he that is nearest the stake wins.
—STEEVENS.

^k Thus in the original:

"A pick-axe and a spade,

"And eke a winding sheet;

"A house of clay for to be made,

"For such a guest most meet."—STEEVENS.

Ham. There's another : Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer ? Where be his quiddits^l now, his quillets,^m his cases, his tenures, and his tricks ? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconceⁿ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery ? Humph ! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,^o his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,^p his recoveries : Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt ? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures ? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box ; and must the inheritor himself have no more ? ha ?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins ?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that.^q I will speak to this fellow :—Whose grave's this, sirrah ?

I Clo. Mine, sir.—

O, a pit of clay for to be made [Sings.
For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed ; for thou liest in't.

I Clo. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours : for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

— *quiddits*, &c.] i. e. *Subtleties*.

^m — *quillets*,] *Nice and frivolous distinctions*.

ⁿ — *the sconce*—] i. e. *The head*.

^o — *statutes*,] A species of security for money, affecting real property, whereby the lands of the debtor, are conveyed to the creditor, till out of the rents and profits of them his debt may be satisfied.—MALONE.

^p — *double vouchers*, &c.] A recovery with *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from two persons (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person,) being successively *voucher*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. *Statutes* are (not acts of parliament, but) *statutes-merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgment for securing *debts*, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed.—RITSON.

^q — *assurance in that*.] A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common *assurances* of the kingdom.—MALONE.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

1 Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for ?

1 Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman then ?

1 Clo. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't ?

1 Clo. One, that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is ! we must speak by the card,^r or equivocation will undo us. By the lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it ; the age is grown so picked,^s that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave maker ?

1 Clo. Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long's that since ?

1 Clo. Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : It was that very day that young Hamlet was born :^t he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

1 Clo. Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why ?

1 Clo. 'Twill not be seen in him there ; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad ?

1 Clo. Very strangely, they say.

^r — we must speak by the card,] The card is the mariner's compass, or more properly the paper on which the points of the wind are marked. To speak by the card is to speak with great exactness, true to a point.—NARES.

^s — picked,] i.e. Spruce, affected. It is a metaphor taken from birds, who dress themselves by picking out or pruning their broken or superfluous feathers.—STEEVENS.

^t — that young Hamlet was born:] By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a very young man, one that designed to go back to school, i.e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first.
—BLACKSTONE.

Ham. How strangely?

I Clo. 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

I Clo. Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man, and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot?

I Clo. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

I Clo. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

I Clo. A whoreson mad fellow's it was; Whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

I Clo. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, sir, was Yorick's scull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

[*Takes the Scull.*]

I Clo. E'en that.

Ham. Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour^u she must come; make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

^u ——— favour——] i. e. Countenance or complexion.

Ham. Dost thou think, Alexander looked o'this fashion
i'the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [*Throws down the Scull.*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio!
Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander,
till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither
with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus;
Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned
to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And
why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they
not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead, and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!^x

But soft! but soft! aside;—Here comes the king,

*Enter Priests, &c. in Procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA,
LAERTES, and Mourners following; King, Queen, their
Trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?

And with such maimed rites!^y This doth betoken,

The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand

Fordo^z its own life. 'Twas of some estate:^a

Couch we a while, and mark. [*Retiring with HORATIO.*]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1 *Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty: Her death was doubtful;

^x ——— flaw!] i. e. A sudden gust of wind.

^y ——— maimed rites!] i. e. Imperfect obsequies.

^z *Fordo*—] i. e. Undo, destroy.

^a ——— some estate:] Some person of high rank.

And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
 She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
 Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,
 Shards,^b flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her,
 Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,^c
 Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
 Of bell and burial.^d

Laer. Must there no more be done ?

1 Priest. No more be done !
 We should profane the service of the dead,
 To sing a *requiem*,^e and such rest to her
 As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i'the earth ;—
 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
 May violets spring !—I tell thee, churlish priest,
 A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
 When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia !

Queen. Sweets to the sweet : Farewell !

[*Scattering Flowers.*

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife ;
 I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
 And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
 Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
 Depriv'd thee of !—Hold off the earth awhile,
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms :

[*Leaps into the Grave.*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead ;
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
 To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
 Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [*advancing.*] What is he, whose grief
 Bears such an emphasis ? whose phrase of sorrow
 Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand

^b *Shards,*] i. e. Broken pots or tiles, called *pot-sherds*, *tile-sherds*.

^c — *crants,*] i. e. *Garlands*. The word is German.

^d — *burial,*] i. e. *Interment in consecrated ground.*—WARRBURTON.

^e — *a requiem,*] i. e. A mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased.—STEEVENS.

Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,

Hamlet the Dane.

[*Leaps into the Grave.*]

Laer.

The devil take thy soul!

[*Grappling with him.*]

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;

For, though I am not splenetic and rash,

Yet have I in me something dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen,—

Hor.

Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the Grave.*]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son! what theme!

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thy-
Woul't drink up eisel?^f eat a crocodile? [self?
I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us; till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

^f *Woul't drink up eisel?*] i. e. *Wilt thou swallow down large draughts of vinegar.*—THEOBALD. “It may be observed that *off*, *out*, and *up*, are continually used by the purest and most excellent of our writers, after verbs of destroying, consuming, eating, drinking, &c.: to us, who are less conversant with the power of language, they appear somewhat like expletives; but they undoubtedly contributed something to the force, and something to the roundness of the sentence.”—GIFFORD'S *Ben Jonson*, vol. i. p. 122, where the interpretation that I have adopted is approved.

Queen. This is mere madness :
 And thus a while the fit will work on him ;
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,
 When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,^g
 His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir ;
 What is the reason that you use me thus ?
 I lov'd you ever : But it is no matter ;
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.—
 [*Exit* HORATIO.
 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;
 [*To* LAERTES.

We'll put the matter to the present push.—
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
 This grave shall have a living monument :
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir : now shall you see the
 You do remember all the circumstance ? [*other ;—*

Hor. Remember it, my lord !

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
 That would not let me sleep : methought, I lay
 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.^h Rashly,

^g — disclos'd,] i. e. *Hatched*. During three days after the pigeon has hatched her couplets (for she lays but two eggs) she never quits her nest, except for a few moments in quest of a little food for herself ; as all that her young [which when first disclosed are covered only with a yellow down] require, is, to be kept warm, an office she never entrusts to the male.—STEEVENS and HEATH.

^h — mutines in the bilboes.] *Mutines*, the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost perfection. To understand Shakspeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close to-

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,
 Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
 When our deep plots do pall;^g and that should teach us,
 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
 Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor.

That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
 My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
 Grop'd I to find out them : had my desire ;
 Finger'd their packet ; and, in fine, withdrew
 To mine own room again : making so bold,
 My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
 Their grand commission ; where I found, Horatio,
 A royal knavery ; an exact command,—
 Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
 Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
 With, ho ! such bugs and goblins in my life,^h—
 That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,ⁱ
 No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
 My head should be struck off.

Hor.

Is't possible ?

Ham. Here's the commission ; read it at more leisure.
 But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed ?

Hor. Ay, 'beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villainies,
 Or I could make^k a prologue to my brains,

gether, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish armada.—JOHNSON and STEEVENS.

^g ——— *Rashly,*

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When, &c.] Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins with saying—That he *rashly*—and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly*—praised be rashness for it—*Let us not think these events casual, but let us know, that is, take notice and remember, that we sometimes succeed by indiscretion when we fail by deep plots, and infer the perpetual superintendence and agency of the Divinity.* The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being, who shall reflect on the course of his own life.—JOHNSON.

^h *With, ho ! such bugs and goblins in my life,]* With such causes of terror, rising from my character and designs.—JOHNSON.

ⁱ ——— *no leisure bated,]* Without any abatement or intermission of time.—MALONE.

^k *Or I could make—]* Or in old English signified *before*.—MALONE.

They had begun the play ;—I sat me down ;
 Devis'd a new commission ; wrote it fair :
 I once did hold it, as our statist¹ do,
 A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
 How to forget that learning ; but, sir, now
 It did me yeoman's service :^m Wilt thou know
 The effect of what I wrote ?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,—
 As England was his faithful tributary ;
 As love between them like the palm might flourish ;
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities ;ⁿ
 And many such like as's of great charge,—
 That on the view and knowing of these contents,
 Without debatement further, more, or less,
 He should the bearers put to sudden death,
 Not shriving-time allow'd.^o

Hor. How was this seal'd ?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant ;
 I had my father's signet in my purse,
 Which was the model^p of that Danish seal :
 Folded the writ up in form of the other ;
 Subscrib'd it ; gave't the impression ; plac'd it safely,
 The changeling never known : Now, the next day
 Was our sea-fight : and what to this was sequent
 Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

¹ — statist—] i. e. *Statesmen*. Most of the great men of Shakspeare's times, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands ; their secretaries very neat ones.—BLACKSTONE.

^m — yeoman's service:] i. e. *Eminent service*: the ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ *As peaces should still her wheaten garland wear,*

And stand a comma 'tween their amities ;] The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences ; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write,—That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity* ; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities*. This is not an easy style ; but is it not the style of Shakspeare ?—JOHNSON.

^o *Not shriving-time allow'd.]* i. e. Without time for confession of their sins : another proof of Hamlet's christian-like disposition.—STEEVENS.

^p — model—] In old language the *copy*.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employ-
They are not near my conscience; their defeat [ment];
Does by their own insinuation^a grow:
'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon?
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes:
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him^r with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England,
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours;^s
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace; who comes here?

Enter OSRIC.

Os. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know this
water-fly?^t

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to

^a — by their own insinuation—] By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employment.—MALONE.

^r To quit him—] To requite him.

^s — I'll court his favours:] The old copy reads, *I'll count his favours*; but it must have been by a misprint, for, as M. Mason very justly asks, "What favours had Hamlet received from Laertes, that he was to make account of?"

^t — Dost know this water-fly?] A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler.—JOHNSON.

know him : He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess : 'Tis a chough ;^u but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit : Your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot ; or my complexion——

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how.—My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head : Sir, this is the matter,—

Ham. I beseech you, remember——

[HAMLET moves him to put on his Hat.

Osr. Nay, good my lord ; for my ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes : believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,^x of very soft society, and great showing : Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,^y for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.^z

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ;^a

^u —— 'Tis a chough ;] A kind of jackdaw.

^x —— full of most excellent differences,] Full of distinguishing excellencies.—JOHNSON.

^y —— the card or calendar of gentry,] The general preceptor of elegance ; the card by which a gentleman is to direct his course ; the calendar by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable.—JOHNSON.

^z —— for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.] You shall find him containing and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to contemplate for imitation.—JOHNSON.

^a Sir, his definement, &c.] This is designed as a specimen and ridicule of the court jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, "Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be endless ; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him we must look into his mirror, and his imitators will appear no more than his shadows."—WARBURTON.

—though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article;^b and his infusion of such dearth^c and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirrour; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know, you are not ignorant——

Ham. I would, you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me;^d—Well, sir.

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is——

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were o know himself.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed^e he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawned,^f as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as

^b — of great article;] i. e. Of great account or value.

^c — dearth—] i. e. Dearness, value, price; and his internal qualities of such value and rarity.—JOHNSON.

^d — if you did, it would not much approve me;] If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To approve, is to recommend to approbation.—JOHNSON.

^e — meed—] i. e. Excellence.

^f — impawned,] Wagered, and staked.

girdle, hangers,^g and so: Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew, you must be edified by the margent,^h ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germanⁱ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawned, as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid,^k that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How, if I answer, no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall; If it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I deliver you so?

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship. [Exit.

^g — hangers,] Under this term were comprehended four graduated straps, &c. that hung down in a belt on each side of its receptacle for the sword.—STEEVENS.

^h — you must be edified by the margent,] Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the margent of the leaf.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ — german—] i. e. *A-kin*.

^k The king, sir, hath laid,] As three or four complete pages would scarcely hold the remarks already printed, together with those which have lately been communicated to me in MS. on this very unimportant passage, I shall avoid both partiality and tediousness, by the omission of them all. I therefore leave the conditions of this wager to be adjusted by the members of Brookes's or the Jockey-Club at Newmarket, who on such subjects may prove the most enlightened commentators, and most successfully bestir themselves in the cold unpoetick dabble of calculation.—STEEVENS.

Ham. Yours, yours.—He does well, to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.¹

Ham. He did comply^m with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter;ⁿ a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;^p and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: He sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment^p to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*]

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds.^q

¹ *This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.*] i. e. *Is prematurely hasty*—starts away almost before he has means, ere he has found legs or means to carry or be carried.—*Specimen of a New Edition of Shakspeare*, 1819.

^m — *comply*—] For compliment.

ⁿ — *outward habit of encounter*;] i. e. *Exterior politeness of address*; in allusion to Osric's last speech.—HENLEY.

^o — *a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions*;] The meaning is, “these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approving judgments. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men.” Who has not seen this observation verified?—JOHNSON. *Fond* is *foolish*; *winnowed* is *sifted, examined*.—STEEVENS.

^p — *gentle entertainment*—] Mild and temperate conversation.—JOHNSON.

^q — *I shall win at the odds.*] I shall succeed with the advantage that I am allowed.—MALONE.

But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving,^r as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:^s I will forestal their repair hither, and say, you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?^t Let be.

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with Foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts the Hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir:^u I have done you wrong;

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,

How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.

What I have done,

That might your nature, honour, and exception,

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

^r — *gain-giving.*] The same as *misgiving*.—STEEVENS.

^s *If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:*] With these presages of future evils arising in the mind, the poet has fore-run many events which are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so particularly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely hinted at, as in the instance of Juliet, who tells her lover from the window, that he appears *like one dead in the bottom of a tomb*. The supposition that the genius of the mind gave an alarm before approaching dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never be totally driven out: yet it must be allowed the merit of adding beauty to poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the weak and superstitious.—STEEVENS.

^t — *Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?*] The meaning may be, "It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life; yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared."—WARBURTON.

^u *Give me your pardon, sir:*] I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood.—JOHNSON.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:
 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
 And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
 Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
 Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,
 Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
 Sir, in this audience,
 Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
 Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
 That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
 And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,*
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
 To my revenge: but in my terms of honour,
 I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,
 To keep my name ungor'd: But till that time,
 I do receive your offer'd love like love,
 And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely;
 And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
 Give us the foils; come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
 Your skill shall, like a star i'the darkest night,
 Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric.—Cousin
 You know the wager? [Hamlet,

Ham. Very well, my lord;
 Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.†

* *I am satisfied in nature, &c.*] This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contented with Hamlet's submission.—STEEVENS.

† *Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.*] When the odds were on the side of Laertes, who was to hit Hamlet twelve times to nine, it was, perhaps, the author's slip. Sir T. Hanmer reads, *Your grace hath laid upon the weaker side.*—JOHNSON.

King. I do not fear it : I have seen you both :—
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well : These foils have all a length ?
[*They prepare to play.*]

Osr. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups^z of wine upon that table :—
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire ;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
And in the cup an union^a shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn ; Give me the cups ;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet.—Come, begin ;—
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*]

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well,—again.

King. Stay, give me drink : Hamlet, this pearl is thine ;^b
Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound ; and Cannon shot off within.*]

Ham. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.
Come.—Another hit ; What say you ? [*They play.*]

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.—

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows :

The queen carouses^c to thy fortune, Hamlet.

^z — stoups—] i. e. *Flagons*.

^a — an union—] A very precious pearl.—MALONE.

^b — this pearl is thine ;] Under pretence of throwing a pearl into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he afterwards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him,—“ Is the union here ? ”—STEEVENS.

^c — carouses—] i. e. *Drinks success to you.*

Ham. Good madam,——

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord ;—I pray you, pardon me.

King. It is the poison'd cup ; it is too late. [*Aside.*]

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*]

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes : You do but dally ;
I pray you, pass with your best violence ;
I am afeard, you make a wanton of me.^d

Laer. Say you so ? come on. [*They play.*]

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[*LAERTES wounds HAMLET ; then, in scuffling,
they change Rapiers, and HAMLET wounds
LAERTES.*]

King. Part them, they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come again. [*The Queen falls.*]

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho !

Hor. They bleed on both sides :—How is it, my lord ?

Osr. How is't, Laertes ?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osrice ;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear
Hamlet !—

The drink, the drink ;—I am poison'd ! [*Dies.*]

Ham. O villainy !—Ho ! let the door be lock'd :
Treachery ! seek it out. [*LAERTES falls.*]

Laer. It is here, Hamlet : Hamlet, thou art slain ;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour's life ;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated, and envenom'd : the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me ; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again : Thy mother's poison'd ;

^d ——— you make a wanton of me.] i. e. You trifle with me ; make child's play.

I can no more; the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point

Envenom'd too!—Then, venom, to thy work.

[*Stabs the King.*

Osr. & Lords. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

Ham. Here thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion:—Is the union here?^e

Follow my mother.

[*King Dies.*

Laer. He is justly serv'd;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.—

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;
Nore thine on me!

[*Dies.*

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio:—Wretched queen, adieu!—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act.^f
Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant,^g death,
Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you,—
But let it be:—Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,—
Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have it.—
O God!—Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me?
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.—

[*March afar off, and Shot within.*

What warlike noise is this?

^e — *Is the union here?*] It should seem from this line, and Laertes' next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring king to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips.—MALONE.

^f *That are but mutes or audience to this act,*] That are either auditors of this catastrophe, or at most only mute performers, that fill the stage without any part in the action.—JOHNSON.

^g — *sergeant,*] i. e. *Bailiff*, or *sheriff's officer*.—RITSON.

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
To the ambassadors of England gives [Poland,
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows^h my spirit ;
I cannot live to hear the news from England :
But I do prophecy, the election lights
On Fortinbras ; he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurrents,ⁱ more or less,
Which have solicited,^k—The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart ;—Good night, sweet
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! [prince ;
Why does the drum come hither ? [*March within.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others.

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What is it, you would see ?
If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc !^l—O proud death !
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,^m
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck ?

1 Amb. The sight is dismal ;
And our affairs from England come too late :
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :
Where should we have our thanks ?

Hor. Not from his mouth,ⁿ
Had it the ability of life to thank you ;
He never gave commandment for their death.

^h *The potent poison quite o'er-crows—*] Alluding to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ — *occurrents,*] i. e. *Incidents.*

^k — *solicited,*] For *excited.*

^l *This quarry cries on havoc!*] To cry on, was to exclaim against. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more quarry or game than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *havock.*—JOHNSON.

^m *What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,*] The allusion is to the *choæ*, or feasts of the dead, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in *The Life of Antonius.*—STEEVENS.

ⁿ — *his mouth,*] i. e. *The king's.*

But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies
 High on a stage be placed to the view;
 And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
 How these things came about: So shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;^o
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
 Of deaths put on^p by cunning, and forc'd cause;
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
 Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,^q
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:
 But let this same be presently perform'd,
 Even while men's minds are wild: lest more mischance,
 On plots, and errors, happen.

Fort. Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
 For he was likely, had he been put on,
 To have prov'd most royally; and, for his passage,
 The soldier's musick, and the rites of war,
 Speak loudly for him.—
 Take up the bodies:—Such a sight as this
 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
 Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [*A Dead March.*

[*Exeunt, bearing off the dead Bodies; after
 which a Peal of Ordnance is shot off.*]

^o *Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;*] Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by "*carnal stings.*" The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude.—MALONE.

^p ——— *put on—*] i. e. *Instigated, produced.*

^q ——— *some rights of memory in this kingdom,*] Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom.—MALONE.

^r If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the

tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity: with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life, and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.*

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.—JOHNSON.

* In a note on the scene an attempt is made to show that this severity of conduct was neither wanton or cruel on the part of Hamlet. The following remarks by Dr. Ferriar, *Essay on Apparitions*, p. 114, are so ingenious, and shed so much light on the character of Hamlet, that I cannot forbear inserting them.—“Shakspeare’s character of *Hamlet* can only be understood on the supposition of *latent lunacy*. He feigns madness for political purposes, while the poet means to represent his understanding as really (and unconsciously to himself) unhinged by the cruel circumstances in which he is placed. The horror of the communication made by his father’s spectre; the necessity of belying his attachment to an innocent and deserving object; the certainty of his mother’s guilt; and the supernatural impulse by which he is goaded to an act of assassination, abhorrent to his nature; are causes sufficient to overwhelm and distract a mind previously disposed to ‘weakness and melancholy,’ and originally full of tenderness and natural affection. By referring to the play, it will be seen, that his real insanity is only developed after the mock play. Then, in place of a systematic conduct, conducive to his purposes, he becomes irresolute, in consequent, and the plot appears to stand unaccountably still. Instead of striking at his object, he resigns himself to the current of events, and sinks at length, ignobly, under the stream.” This opinion of Dr. Ferriar’s coincides with that of Goethé, who in *William Meister’s Apprenticeship*, b. iv. c. 13, says, “It is clear to me that Shakspeare’s intention was to exhibit the effects of a great action, imposed as a duty on a mind too feeble for its accomplishment. In this sense, I find the character consistent throughout. Here is an oak tree planted in a china vase, proper only to receive the most delicate flowers. The roots strike out and the vessel flies to pieces.”

OTHELLO,

THIS tragedy, which Malone supposes to have been written so early as 1604, was first entered at Stationers' Hall, Oct. 6, 1621, and printed the year following.

The story is taken from the seventh tale, in the third decad, of *Cynthia's Novels*; a work, of which it is not believed that any English translation existed in Shakspeare's time; and with the contents of which he must have become acquainted by his knowledge either of the Italian or the French language.

"The time of this play," says Reed, "may be ascertained from the following circumstances: Selymus the Second formed his design against Cyprus in 1569, and took it in 1571. This was the only attempt the Turks ever made upon that island after it came into the hands of the Venetians, (which was in the year 1473,) wherefore the time must fall in with some part of that interval. We learn from the play that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes, in order for the invasion of Cyprus, that it first came sailing towards Cyprus, then went to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its way to Cyprus. These are real historical facts which happened when Mustapha, Selymus's general, attacked Cyprus in May, 1570, which therefore is the true period of this performance. See Kolles's *History of the Turks*, p. 838. 846. 867."

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Duke of Venice.

BRABANTIO, *a senator.*

Two other Senators.

GRATIANO, *brother to Brabantio.*

LODOVICO, *kinsman to Brabantio.*

OTHELLO, *the Moor :*

CASSIO, *his lieutenant ;*

IAGO, *his ancient.*

RODERIGO, *a Venetian gentleman.*

MONTANO, *Othello's predecessor in the government of
Cyprus.^a*

Clown, servant to Othello.

Herald.

DESDEMONA, *daughter to Brabantio, and wife to Othello.*

EMILIA, *wife to Iago.*

BIANCA, *a courtesan, mistress to Cassio.*

*Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors,
Attendants, &c.*

SCENE, *for the first Act, in Venice ; during the rest of the
Play, at a Sea-Port in Cyprus.*

^a Though the rank which Montano held in Cyprus cannot be exactly ascertained, yet from many circumstances, we are sure he had not the powers with which Othello was subsequently invested.

Perhaps we do not receive any one of the *Personæ Dramatis* to Shakspeare's plays, as it was originally drawn up by himself. These appendages are wanting to all the quartos, and are very rarely given in the folio. At the end of this play, however, the following enumeration of persons occurs :

"The names of the actors.—Othello, *the Moore*.—Brabantio, *Father to Desdemona*.—Cassio, *an Honourable Lieutenant*.—Iago, *a Villaine*.—Rodorigo, *a gull'd Gentleman*.—Duke of Venice.—Senators.—Montano, *Governour of Cyprus*.—Gentlemen of Cyprus.—Lodovico, and Gratiano, *two noble Venetians*.—Sailors.—Clowne.—Desdemona, *Wife to Othello*.—Æmilia, *Wife to Iago*.—Bianca, *a Courtesan*."—STEEVENS.

O T H E L L O,
THE MOOR OF VENICE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Venice. *A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Rod. TUSH, never tell me, I take it much unkindly,
That thou, Iago,—who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine,—should'st know of this.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me:—
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me, thou did'st hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant, [city,
Off-capp'd^a to him:—and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,^b
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
And, in conclusion, nonsuits
My mediators; *for certes,*^c says he,
I have already chose my officer.
And what was he?

Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,^d

^a *Off-capp'd*—] This is the reading of the folio.

^b — *circumstance*,]—here signifies *circumlocution*.—REED.

^c — *certes*,] i. e. *Certainly, in truth*. Obsolete.

^d — *a Florentine*,] It appears from many passages of this play, rightly understood, that Cassio was a Florentine, and Iago a Venetian.—HAMMER.

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;^e
 That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows,
 More than a spinster; unless the bookish theorick,^f
 Wherein the toged consuls^g can propose
 As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,
 Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election:
 And I,—of whom his eyes had seen the proof
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus; and on other grounds
 Christian and heathen,—must be be-lee'd and calm'd^h
 By debtor and creditor, this counter-caster;ⁱ
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I, (God bless the mark!^k) his Moorship's ancient.

Rod. By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago. But there's no remedy, 'tis the curse of service;
 Preferment goes by letter,^l and affection,
 Not by the old gradation, where each second
 Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,
 Whether I in any just term am affin'd^m
 To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him then.

Iago. O, sir, content you;
 I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
 We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
 Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,

^e *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;*] If the text is correct, we must adopt Steevens's interpretation of this difficult passage, and suppose that Iago means to say, with reference to Cassio's connexion with Bianca, that he is *very near being married* to a fair, bad woman. Tyrwhitt conjectures that we should read *life for wife*, and adds, "the allusion is evident to the gospel-judgment against those, of whom all men speak well."

^f — theorick,] i. e. Theory.

^g — toged consuls—] The rulers of the state, or civil governors. By *toged* perhaps is meant *peaceable*, in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he had been speaking. He might have formed the word in allusion to the Latin adage,—*Cedant arma togæ*.—MALONE and STEEVENS.

^h — be-lee'd and calm'd—] Terms of navigation.

ⁱ — this counter-caster;] It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with counters.—STEEVENS.

^k — bless the mark! Kelly, in his comments on Scots proverbs, observes, that the Scots, when they compare person to person, use this exclamation.—STEEVENS.

^l — by letter,] By recommendation from powerful friends.—JOHNSON.

^m Whether I in any just term am affin'd—] Do I stand within any such terms of propinquity, or relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him?—JOHNSON.

That, doating on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender; and, when he is old, ca-
shier'd :

Whip me such honest knaves :ⁿ Others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves ;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lin'd their
coats,

Do themselves homage : these fellows have some soul ;
And such a one do I profess myself.

For, sir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago :
In following him, I follow but myself ;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end :
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern,^o 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at : I am not what I am.

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,^p
If he can carry't thus !

Iago. Call up her father,
Rouse him : make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets ; incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies : that though his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
As it may lose some colour.

Rod. Here is her father's house ; I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do ; with like timorous accent, and dire yell,

ⁿ — knaves:] *Knave* is here for *servant*, but with a sly mixture of contempt.
—JOHNSON.

^o *In compliment extern,*] In that which I do only for an outward show of civi-
lity.—JOHNSON.

^p *What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,*] *Full fortune* is, I believe, a com-
plete piece of good fortune. *Owe* is *possess*.—STEEVENS.

As when by night and negligence,^a the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What ho! Brabantio! signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago. Awake! what, ho! Brabantio! thieves! thieves!
thieves!

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO, above, at a Window.

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What's the matter there?

Rod. Signior, is all your family within?

Iago. Are your doors lock'd?

Bra. Why? wherefore ask you this?

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are robb'd; for shame, put on
your gown;

Your heart is burst,^r you have lost half your soul;

Even now, very now, an old black ram

Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise;

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:

Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits?

Rod. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

Bra. Not I; what are you?

Rod. My name is—Roderigo.

Bra. The worse welcome:

I have charg'd thee, not to haunt about my doors:

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,

My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,

Being full of supper, and distempering draughts,^s

Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come

To start my quiet.

Rod. Sir, sir, sir, sir,——

Bra. But thou must needs be sure,

^a — by night and negligence,] Not that the fire was spied by negligence, but the fire, which came by night and negligence.—EDWARDS.

^r — burst,] i. e. Broken.

^s — distempering draughts,] To be distempered with liquor, was, in Shakespeare's age, the phrase for intoxication.—STEEVENS.

My spirit and my place, have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

Rod. Patience, good sir.

Bra. Why tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange.^t

Rod. Most grave Brabantio,
In simple, and pure soul I come to you.

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those, that will not
serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do
you service, you think we are ruffians: You'll have your
daughter covered with a Barbary horse: you'll have your
nephews^u neigh to you: you'll have coursers for cousins,
and gennets^x for germans.

Bra. What profane^y wretch art thou?

Iago. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter
and the Moor are now making the beast with two
backs.

Bra. Thou art a villain.

Iago. You are—a senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you,
If't be your pleasure, and most wise consent,
(As partly, I find it is,) that your fair daughter,
At this odd-even and dull watch o'the night,^z
Transported—with no worse nor better guard,
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,
To the gross clas of a lascivious Moor,—
If this be known to you, and your allowance,^a

^t ——— *this is Venice;*

My house is not a grange.] That is, “you are in a populous city, not in a lone house, where a robbery might easily be committed.” *Grange* is strictly and properly the farm of a monastery, where the religious reposed their corn. *Grangia*, Lat. from *granum*. But in Lincolnshire, and in other northern counties, they call every lone house, or farm which stands solitary, a *grange*.—T. WARTON.

^u ——— *nephews*—] *Nephew*, in this instance, has the power of the Latin word *nepos*, and signifies a grandson, or any lineal descendant however remote.—STEEVENS.

^x ——— *gennets*—] i. e. *Spanish horses*.—STEEVENS.

^y ——— *profane*—] i. e. *Using gross and licentious language*.—JOHNSON.

^z *At this odd-even—o'the night,*] By this singular expression our poet appears to have meant, that it was just approaching to, or just past, that it was doubtful whether at that moment it stood at the point of midnight, or at some other less equal division of the twenty-four hours; which a few minutes either before or after midnight would be.—MALONE.

^a ——— *and your allowance,*] i. e. *Done with your approbation*.—MALONE.

We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs ;
 But, if you know not this, my manners tell me,
 We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe,
 That, from the sense of all civility,^b
 I thus would play and trifle with your reverence :
 Your daughter,—if you have not given her leave,
 I say again, hath made a gross revolt ;
 Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
 In an extravagant^c and wheeling stranger,
 Of here and every where: Straight satisfy yourself:
 If she be in her chamber, or your house,
 Let loose on me the justice of the state
 For thus deluding you.

Bra. Strike on the tinder, ho !

Give me a taper :—call up all my people :—

This accident is not unlike my dream:

Belief of it oppresses me already :—

Light, I say ! light ! [*Exit, from above.*]

Iago. Farewell ; for I must leave you :

It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,

To be produc'd (as, if I stay, I shall,)

Against the Moor : For, I do know, the state,—

However this may gall him with some check,^d

Cannot with safety cast him ;^e for he's embark'd

With such loud reason to the Cyprus' wars,

(Which even now stand in act,) that, for their souls,

Another of his fathom they have not,

To lead their business : in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,

Yet, for necessity of present life,

I must show out a flag and sign of love,

Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,

Lead to the Sagittary the rais'd search ;

And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [*Exit.*]

^b — from the sense of all civility,] That is, in opposition to, or departing from, the sense of all civility.—MALONE.

^c — extravagant—] For wandering ; used in its Latin signification.

^d — check,] i.e. Rebuke.

^e — cast him ;] That is, dismiss him ; reject him.

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with Torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil: gone she is:
And what's to come of my despised time,
Is nought but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her?—O, unhappy girl!—
With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—
How didst thou know 'twas she?—O, thou deceiv'st me
Past thought!—What said she to you?—Get more tapers;
Raise all my kindred.—Are they married think you?

Rod. Truly, I think, they are.

Bra. O heaven!—How got she out!—O treason of the
blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act.—Are there not charms,
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abus'd?^f Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir; I have indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother.—O, that you had had her!—
Some one way, some another.—Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think, I can discover him; if you please
To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
I may command at most;—Get weapons, ho!
And raise some special officers of night.—
On, good Roderigo:—I'll deserve your pains. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The same. Another Street.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants.

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o'the conscience,^g

^f — *abus'd?*] i. e. *Infatuated*, and made subject to illusions and false imaginations.—JOHNSON.

^g — *stuff o'the conscience*,] This expression to common readers appears harsh. *Stuff* of the conscience is, *substance* or *essence* of the conscience. *Stuff* is a word of great force in the Tentonick languages. The elements are called in Dutch, *hoef'd stoffen*, or *head stuffs*.—JOHNSON.

To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity
 Sometimes, to do me service: Nine or ten times
 I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.

Oth. 'Tis better as it is.

Iago. Iago, but he prated,
 And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
 Against your honour,
 That, with the little godliness I have,
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray, sir,
 Are you fast married? for, be sure of this,—
 That the magnificoⁱ is much beloved;
 And hath, in his effect, a voice potential
 As double as the duke's;^k he will divorce you;
 Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
 The law (with all his might, to enforce it on,)
 Will give him cable.

Oth. Let him do his spite:
 My services, which I have done the signiory,
 Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,
 (Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
 I shall promulgate,) I fetch my life and being
 From men of royal siege;^l and my demerits^m
 May speak, unbonneted,ⁿ to as proud a fortune
 As this that I have reach'd: For know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhoused^o free condition
 Put into circumscription and confine
 For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come yonder?

ⁱ — the magnifico—] “The chief men of Venice are by a peculiar name called *magnifici*, i. e. *magnificoes*.”—TOLLETT.

^k — a voice potential

As double as the duke's;] Potential is powerful; double is strong.

^l — men of royal siege;] Men who have sat upon royal thrones. Siege is used for seat by other authors.—STEEVENS.

^m — demerits—] The word has the same meaning in our author, and many others of that age, as *merits*. *Mereo* and *demereo* had the same meaning in the Roman language.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ May speak, unbonneted,] Mr. Fuseli (and who is better acquainted with the sense and spirit of our author?) explains this contested passage as follows:

“I am his equal or superior in rank; and were it not so, such are my merits, that, unbonneted, without the addition of patrician or senatorial dignity, they may speak to as proud a fortune, &c. At Venice the bonnet, as well as the toga, is a badge of aristocratic honours to this day.”—STEEVENS.

^o — unhoused—] Free from domestic cares. A thought natural to an adventurer.—JOHNSON.

Enter CASSIO, at a distance, and certain Officers with Torches.

Iago. These are the raised father, and his friends:
You were best go in.

Oth. Not I: I must be found;
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
What is the news?

Cas. The duke does greet you, general;
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,
Even on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter, think you?

Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;
It is a business of some heat: the gallies
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night, at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls,^p rais'd, and met,
Are at the duke's already: You have been hotly call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate hath sent about three several quests,^q
To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you. [Exit.

Cas. Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack;^r
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Cas. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Cas. To who?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go?

^p — consuls,] i. e. Counsellors.

^q — quests,] On this occasion, searches.—STEEVENS.

^r — carack;] A ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value; perhaps what we now call a gallcon.—JOHNSON.

Oth.

Have with you.

Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers of night, with
Torches and Weapons.*

Iago. It is Brabantio:—general, be advis'd;^s
He comes to bad intent.

Oth.

Hola! stand there!

Rod. Signior, it is the Moor.

Bra.

Down with him, thief!

[*They draw on both sides.*

Iago. You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.

Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will
rust them.—

Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

Bra. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my
daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her:

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,

If she in chains of magick were not bound,

Whether a maid—so tender, fair, and happy;

So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd

The wealthy curled^t darlings of our nation,

Would ever have, to incur a general mock,

Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom

Of such a thing as thou: to fear,^u not to delight.

Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,

That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms;

Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,

That waken motion:^x—I'll have it disputed on;

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.

I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,

For an abuser of the world, a practiser

Of arts inhibited and out of warrant:—

Lay hold upon him; if he do resist,

Subdue him at his peril.

^s — be advis'd;] That is, be cool; be cautious; be discreet.

^t — curled—] i. e. Elegantly and ostentatiously dressed.—JOHNSON.

^u — to fear,] i. e. To terrify.

^x — waken motion:—] i. e. Excite desires.

Oth. Hold your hands,
Both you of my inclining, and the rest :
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter.—Where will you that I go
To answer this your charge?

Bra. To prison : till fit time
Of law, and course of direct session,
Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey ?
How may the duke be therewith satisfied ;
Whose messengers are here about my side,
Upon some present business of the state,
To bring me to him ?

Off. 'Tis true, most worthy signior,
The duke's in council ; and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.

Bra. How ! the duke in council !
In this time of the night !—Bring him away :
Mine's not an idle cause : the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own :
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves, and pagans,^y shall our statesmen be.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The same. A Council-Chamber.

The Duke and Senators, sitting at a Table ; Officers attending.

Duke. There is no composition^z in the news,
That gives them credit.

1 Sen. Indeed, they are disproportion'd ;
My letters say, a hundred and seven gallies.

Duke. And mine a hundred and forty.

^y *Bond-slaves and pagans,*] i. e. If this Moor is now suffered to escape with impunity, it will be such an encouragement to his black countrymen, that we may expect to see all the first offices of our state filled up by the *pagans* and *bond-slaves* of Africa.—STEEVENS.

^z — composition—] For consistency, concordancy.

2 *Sen.* And mine, two hundred :
 But though they jump not on a just account,
 (As in these cases, where the aim reports,^a
 'Tis oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm
 A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment ;
 I do not so secure me in the error,
 But the main article I do approve
 In fearful sense.

Sailor. [*within.*] What ho ! what ho ! what ho !

Enter an Officer, with a Sailor.

Off. A messenger from the gallies.

Duke. Now ? the business ?

Sail. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes ;
 So was I bid report here to the state,
 By signior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change ?

1 *Sen.* This cannot be,
 By no assay of reason ;^b 'tis a pageant,
 To keep us in false gaze : When we consider
 The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk ;
 And let ourselves again but understand,
 That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
 So may he with more facile question^c bear it,
 For that it stands not in such warlike brace,^d
 But altogether lacks the abilities
 That Rhodes is dress'd in : if we make thought of this,
 We must not think, the Turk is so unskilful,
 To leave that latest which concerns him first ;
 Neglecting an attempt of ease, and gain,
 To wake, and wage,^e a danger profitless.

^a — where the aim reports,] Where conjecture or suspicion tells the tale.—
 MALONE.

^b By no assay of reason ;] Bring it to the test, examine it by reason as we
 examine metals by the assay, it will be found counterfeit by all trials.—
 JOHNSON.

^c — more facile question—] That is, he may carry it with less dispute,
 with less opposition.—M. MASON.

^d — warlike brace,] State of defence. To arm was called to brace on the
 armour.—JOHNSON.

^e — wage,] Here, as in many other places in Shakspeare, signifies to fight,
 to combat.—STEEVENS.

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.
Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
 Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
 Have there injoined them with an after fleet.

1 Sen. Ay, so I thought:—How many, as you guess?

Mess. Of thirty sail: and now do they re-stem
 Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
 Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,
 Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
 With his free duty, recommends you thus,
 And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.—
 Marcus Lucchesé, is he not in town?

1 Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us; wish him^f post-post-haste: despatch.

1 Sen. Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant Moor.

Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Officers.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
 Against the general enemy Ottoman.^g

I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;

[*To BRABANTIO.*

We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;
 Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
 Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the general care
 Take hold on me; for my particular grief
 Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,
 That it engluts and shallows other sorrows,
 And it is still itself.

^f — wish him—] i. e. Recommend, desire him.

^g — we must straight employ you

Against the general enemy Ottoman.] It is a part of the policy of the Venetian state, never to entrust the command of an army to a native: and it was usual for them to employ strangers, and even Moors, in their wars.—MALONE and REED.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! O, my daughter!

Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me;

She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not——

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,
Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
After your own sense; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.^h

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
Hath hither brought.

Duke & Sen. We are very sorry for it.

Duke. What, in your own part, can you say to this?

[*To OTHELLO.*]

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters,—
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her;
The very head and front of my offendingⁱ
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little bless'd with the set phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
Their dearest action^k in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause,

^h *Stood in your action.*] Were the man exposed to your charge or accusation.
JOHNSON.

ⁱ *The very head and front of my offending—*] The main, the whole, unextenuated.
JOHNSON.

^k *Their dearest action—*] i. e. *Their most important action.*—MALONE.

In speaking for myself: Yet, by your gracious patience,
 I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
 (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
 I won his daughter with.

Bra. A maiden never bold;
 Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
 Blush'd at herself; And she,—in spite of nature,
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing,—
 To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on?
 It is a judgment maim'd, and most imperfect,
 That will confess—perfection so could err
 Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
 To find out practices of cunning hell,
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof
 Without more certain and more overt test,¹
 Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
 Of modern^m seeming, do prefer against him.

1 Sen. But, Othello, speak;—
 Did you by indirect and forced courses
 Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
 Or came it by request, and such fair question
 As soul to soul affordeth?

Oth. I do beseech you,
 Send for the lady to the Sagittary,ⁿ
 And let her speak of me before her father:
 If you do find me foul in her report,
 The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
 Not only take away, but let your sentence
 Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

¹ — overt test,] i. e. Open proofs, external evidence.—JOHNSON.

^m — modern—] i. e. Trifling, weak.

ⁿ — the Sagittary,] The Sagittary means the sign of the fictitious creature so called, i. e. an animal compounded of man and horse, and armed with a bow and quiver.—STEEVENS.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them: you best know the place.— [Exeunt IAGO and Attendants.]

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth scapes i'the imminent deadly breach;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance^o in my travel's history:
Wherein of antres^p vast, and desarts wild,^q
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
heaven,

It was my hint^r to speak, such was the process;
And of the cannibals that each other eat,
The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.^s These things to hear,
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear

^o — portance—] i. e. Behaviour.

^p — antres—] Caves and dens.

^q — desarts wild,] Thus the second folio; which was followed by Pope. The first folio reads *desarts idle*, i. e. barren, unprofitable; the reading of the text is adopted by the recommendation of Gifford; see notes to *Ben Jonson*, vol. iii. p. 14, 15.

^r — hint—] i. e. Cause, subject.—NARES.

^s — men whose heads

Do grow beneath their shoulders.] Of these men there is an account in the interpolated travels of Mandeville, a book of that time. Raleigh also has given an account of men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, in his *Description of Guiana*, published in 1596, a book that without doubt Shakespeare had read.—JOHNSON and MALONE.

Devour up my discourse: Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intently: ⁴ I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore,—In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd, she had not heard it; yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me;
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake:
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd;
Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.

Duke. I think this tale would win my daughter too.—
Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak;
If she confess, that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man!—Come hither, gentle mistress;
Do you perceive in all this noble company,
Where most you owe obedience?

Des. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you, I am bound for life, and education,
My life, and education, both do learn me

⁴ — intently:] i. e. With attention to all its parts.

How to respect you; you are the lord of duty,
 I am hitherto your daughter : But here's my husband ;
 And so much duty as my mother show'd
 To you, preferring you before her father,
 So much I challenge that I may profess
 Due to the Moor, my lord.

Bra. God be with you !—I have done :—
 Please it your grace, on to the state affairs ;
 I had rather to adopt a child, than get it.—
 Come hither, Moor :

I here do give thee that with all my heart,
 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
 I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,
 I am glad at soul I have no other child ;
 For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
 To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

Duke. Let me speak like yourself;^u and lay a sentence,
 Which, as a grise,^x or step, may help these lovers
 Into your favour.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,
 By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
 To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
 Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
 What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
 Patience her injury a mockery makes.
 The robb'd, that smiles, steals something from the thief;
 He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

Bra. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile ;
 We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
 He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
 But the free comfort which from thence he hears :^y
 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
 That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
 These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal :

^u *Let me speak like yourself;*] i. e. Let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion.—Sir J. REYNOLDS.

^x — a grise,] Grize from degrees. A grize is a step.—STEEVENS.

^y *But the free comfort which from thence he hears;*] But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on occasion of the sentence.—JOHNSON.

But words are words ; I never yet did hear,
That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear.²
I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes
for Cyprus :—Othello, the fortitude of the place is best
known to you : And though we have there a substitute of
most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress
of effects, throws a more safer voice on you : you must
therefore be content to slubber^a the gloss of your new for-
tunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down :^b I do agnize^c
A natural and prompt alacrity,
I find in hardness ; and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife ;
Due reference of place, and exhibition ;^d
With such accommodation, and besort,
As levels with her breeding.

Duke. If you please,
Be't at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I ; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts,
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend a prosperous^e ear ;

² But words are words ; I never yet did hear,

[That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear.] These moral precepts, says Brabantio, may perhaps be founded in wisdom, but they are of no avail. Words after all are but words ; and I never yet heard that consolatory speeches could reach the afflicted heart through the medium of the ear.—*Pierced* does not mean wounded, but penetrated.—MALONE.

^a — slubber—] i. e. *Obscure*.

^b — thrice-driven bed of down :] A driven bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by driving with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy.—JOHNSON.

^c — agnize—] i. e. *Confess*.

^d I crave fit disposition for my wife ;

[Due reference of place, and exhibition ; &c.] I desire, that proper disposition be made for my wife, that she may have precedence and exhibition, i. e. allowance, accommodation and company, suitable to her rank.—JOHNSON.

^e — prosperous—] i. e. *Propitious*, the reading of all the folios.

And let me find a charter in your voice,^f
To assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and scorn^g of fortunes^h
May trumpet to the world; my heart's subdued
Even to the very qualityⁱ of my lord:
I saw Othello's visage in his mind;
And to his honours, and his valiant parts,
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence: Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords:—'beseech you, let her will
Have a free way.

Vouch with me, heaven; I therefore beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite;
Nor to comply with heat, (the young affect's
In me defunct,) and proper satisfaction;^k
But to be free and bounteous to her mind:
And heaven defend^l your good souls, that you think
I will your serious and great business scant,
For she is with me: No, when light-wing'd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel^m with wanton dullness
My speculative and active instruments,ⁿ
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,

^f — a charter in your voice,] i. e. Let your favour privilege me.—JOHNSON.

^g — scorn—] So the old quarto, 1622. The folio reads storm.

^h My downright violence and scorn of fortunes—] Violence is not violence suffered, but violence acted. Breach of common rules and obligations.—JOHNSON.

ⁱ — quality—] i. e. Condition, profession.

^k Nor to comply with heat, (the young affect's

In me defunct,) and proper satisfaction;] Young affect is youthful passion. I have adopted the reading proposed by Gifford, Massinger, vol. ii. p. 31.

^l — defend—] i. e. Forbid.

^m — seel—] i. e. To close up the eye-lids.—Siller, Fr.—NARES.

ⁿ — speculative and active instruments,] i. e. His eyes.

Either for her stay, or going : the affair cries—haste,
And speed must answer it ; you must hence to-night.

Des. To-night, my lord ?

Duke. This night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i'the morning here we'll meet again.

Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you ;
With such things else of quality and respect,
As doth import you.

Oth. Please your grace, my ancient ;

A man he is of honesty, and trust :
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.

Duke. Let it be so.—

Good night to every one.—And, noble signior,

[*To BRABANTIO.*

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,^o
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

1 Sen. Adieu, brave Moor ! use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor ; have a quick eye to see ;
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*

Oth. My life upon her faith.—Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee ;
I pry'thee, let thy wife attend on her ;
And bring them after in the best advantage.^p—
Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee : we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*

Rod. Iago.

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart ?

Rod. What will I do, thinkest thou ?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

^o *If virtue no delighted beauty lack,*] *Delighted for delighting.* The meaning probably is, if virtue comprehends every thing in itself, then your virtuous son-in-law of course is beautiful : he has that beauty which delights every one.—
STEEVENS.

^p — best advantage.] i. e. *Fairest opportunity.*

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee after it. Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live, when to live is a torment : and then have we a prescription to die, when death is our physician.

Iago. O villainous ! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years ! and since I could distinguish between a benefit and an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen,^q I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do ? I confess, it is my shame to be so fond ; but it is not in virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue ? a fig ! 'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens ; to the which, our wills are gardeners : so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce ; set hyssop, and weed up thyme ; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many ; either to have it steril with idleness, or manured with industry ; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions : But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts ; whereof I take this, that you call—love, to be a sect,^r or scion.

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will. Come, be a man : Drown thyself ? drown cats, and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness ; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse ; follow these wars ; defeat thy favour^s with an usurped beard ; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be, that Desdemona

^q — a Guinea-hen,] A Guinea-hen was anciently the cant term for a prostitute.—STEEVENS.

^r — a sect,] What more modern gardeners call a cutting.—STEEVENS.

^s — defeat thy favour—] i. e. Change thy appearance : defeat from defaire, Fr. to unmake. *Favour* means the combination of features that gives the face its distinguishing character.

should long continue her love to the Moor,—put money in thy purse;—nor he his to her; it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration;^t—put but money in thy purse.—These Moors are changeable in their wills;—fill thy purse with money; the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts,^u shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida.^x She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice.—She must have change, she must: therefore put money in thy purse.—If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: If sanctimony and a frail vow, betwixt an erring^y barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian, be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy, than to be drowned and go without her.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me;—Go, make money:—I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason: Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, and me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse;^z go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i'the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

^t — sequestration;] For separation.

^u — luscious as locusts,] The fruit of the locust-tree, (which I believe is here meant,) is a long black pod, that contains the seeds, among which there is a very sweet luscious juice of much the same consistency as fresh honey.—

STEEVENS.

^x Coloquintida “is most bitter, white like a baule, full of seedes, leaves lyke to cucummers, hoat in the second, dry in the third degree.” Bullein's *Bulwark of Defence*, 1579.

^y — erring—] i. e. *Wandering*.

^z — Traverse;] This was an ancient military word of command. — STEEVENS.

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear.

Rod. I am changed. I'll sell all my land.

Iago. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse. [*Exit* RODERIGO.]

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:

For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,

If I would time expend with such a snipe,

But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;

And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets

He has done my office: I know not if't be true;

But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,

Will do, as if for surety.^a He holds me well;^b

The better shall my purpose work on him.

Cassio's a proper man: Let me see now;

To get his place, and to plume up my will;

A double knavery,—How? how?—Let me see:—

After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,

That he is too familiar with his wife:—

He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,

To be suspected; fram'd to make women false.

The Moor is of a free and open nature,

That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so;

And will as tenderly be led by the nose,

As asses are.

I have't;—it is engender'd:—Hell and night

Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

[*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Sea-port Town in Cyprus. A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO *and Two Gentlemen.*

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

1 Gent. Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,
Descry a sail.

^a — as if for surety.] That is, “I will act as if I were certain of the fact.”

—M. MASON.

^b — He holds me well;] i. e. Esteems me.—REED.

Mon. Methinks, the wind hath spoke aloud at land ;
 A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements ;
 If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
 What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
 Can hold the mortise ? what shall we hear of this ?

2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet :
 For do but stand upon the banning^c shore,
 The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds ;
 The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous main,
 Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
 And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole :^d
 I never did like molestation view
 On th' enchain'd flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
 Be not inshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd ;
 It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3 Gent. News, lords ! our wars are done ;
 The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
 That their designment halts : A noble ship of Venice
 Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
 On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How ! is this true ?

3 Gent. The ship is here put in,
 The Veronessa ;^e Michael Cassio,
 Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,
 Is come on shore : the Moor himself's at sea,
 And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I am glad on't ; 'tis a worthy governor.

3 Gent. But this same Cassio,—though he speak of
 comfort,
 Touching the Turkish loss,—yet he looks sadly,

^c — banning—] i. e. *That execrates the ravages of the waves* ; the reading of the elder quarto. In the folio, *foaming*.

^d — guards of the ever-fixed pole :] Alluding to the star *Arctophylax*. It is some argument in favour of Shakspeare's knowledge of Greek, that *Arctophylax* literally signifies, *the guard of the bear*.

^e *The Veronessa* ;] The reading of the old copies is, *A Veronessa* ; by which a ship of Verona is denoted ; but *Verona* is an inland city. Every inconsistency may, however, be avoided, if we read—*The Veronessa*, i. e. the name of the ship is the *Veronessa*.—STEEVENS.

And prays the Moor be safe ; for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.

Mon. 'Pray heaven he be ;

For I have serv'd him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier.^f Let's to the sea-side, ho !
As well to see the vessel that's come in,
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello ;
Even till we make the main, and the ærial blue,
An indistinct regard.

3 Gent. Come, let's do so ;

For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor ; O, let the heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea !

Mon. Is he well shipp'd ?

Cas. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approv'd allowance ;^g
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.^h

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail, a sail !

Enter another Gentleman.

Cas. What noise ?

4 Gent. The town is empty ; on the brow o'the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry—a sail.

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governor.

2 Gent. They do discharge their shot of courtesy :

[*Guns heard.*]

Our friends, at least.

^f — a full soldier.] i. e. A complete soldier.

^g Of very expert and approv'd allowance ;] Expert and approv'd allowance is put for allow'd and approv'd expertness. This mode of expression is not unfrequent in Shakspeare.—STEEVENS.

^h Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,

Stand in bold cure.] Presumptuous hopes, which have no foundation in probability, may poetically be said to surfeit themselves to death, or forward their own dissolution. To stand in bold cure, is to erect themselves in confidence of being fulfilled.—STEEVENS.

Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arriv'd.

2 Gent. I shall.

[*Exit.*

Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
That paragon's description, and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in the essentialⁱ vesture of creation,
Does bear all excellency. How now? who has put in?

Re-enter second Gentleman.

2 Gent. 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He has had most favourable and happy speed:
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,—
Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures,^k letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

Mon. What is she?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts,
A se'nnight's speed.—Great Jove, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath;
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort!—O, behold,

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and
Attendants.*

The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees:—
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

ⁱ essential—] i. e. *Existent, real.*

^k Their mortal natures,] i. e. *Their deadly, destructive natures.*

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cas. He is not yet arriv'd; nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear;—How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship: But, hark! a sail.

[*Cry within, A sail, a sail! Then Guns heard.*

2 Gent. They give their greeting to the citadel;
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news.—

[*Exit Gentleman.*

Good ancient, you are welcome;—Welcome, mistress:—

[*To EMILIA.*

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy. [*Kissing her.*

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips,
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on; you are pictures out of
doors,

Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries,¹ devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your
beds.

Des. O, fye upon thee, slanderer!

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk;
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

¹ *Saints in your injuries, &c.*] When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity.—JOHNSON.

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What would'st thou write of me, if thou should'st praise me?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't;
For I am nothing, if not critical.^m

Des. Come on, assay:—There's one gone to the harbour?

Iago. Ay, madam,

Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.—
Come, how would'st thou praise me?

Iago. I am about it; but, indeed, my invention
Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize,
It plucks out brains and all: But my muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise,—fairness, and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well prais'd! How, if she be black and witty?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How, if fair and foolish?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair;
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Des. These are old fond paradoxes, to make fools laugh
i'the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her
that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance!—thou praisest the worst best.
But what praise could'st thou bestow on a deserving
woman indeed? one, that, in the authority of her merit,
did justly put on the vouchⁿ of very malice itself?

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;
Fled from her wish, and yet said,—*now I may*;
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly:

^m — critical,] That is, censorious.

ⁿ — put on the vouch—] i. e. Excite the testimony.

She that in wisdom never was so frail,
 To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail ;^o
 She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
 See suitors following, and not look behind ;
 She was a wight,—if ever such wight were,—

Des. To do what ?

Iago. To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.^p

Des. O most lame and impotent conclusion !—Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband.—How say you, Cassio ? is he not a most profane^q and liberal^r counsellor ?

Cas. He speaks home, madam ; you may relish him more in the soldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*aside.*] He takes her by the palm : Ay, well said, whisper : with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do ; I will gyve^s thee in thine own courtship. You say true ; 'tis so, indeed : if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in.^t Very good ; well kissed ! an excellent courtesy !^u 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips ? would, they were clyster-pipes for your sake !—
 [*Trumpet.*] The Moor, I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'Tis truly so.

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes !

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior !

^o — cod's head for the salmon's tail ;] i. e. Exchange a delicacy for coarser fare. In *Queene Elizabeth's household book for the forty-third year of her reign* : Item, the master cookes have to fee all the salmon's tails.—STEEVENS.

^p To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.] i. e. To nurse children, and keep household accounts. The expressions used by Iago, are only instances of the want of natural affection and the predominance of a critical censoriousness, which he allows himself to be possessed of, when he says, O ! I am nothing, if not critical.—STEEVENS.

^q — profane—] i. e. Gross of language.

^r — liberal—] For licentious.

^s — gyve—] i. e. Shackle.

^t — to play the sir in.] That is, to show your good breeding and gallantry.—HENLEY.

^u — well kissed ! an excellent courtesy !] Spoken when Cassio kisses his hand, and Desdemona courties.—JOHNSON.

Des.

My dear Othello?

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content,
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus-high; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des.

The heavens forbid,
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow!

Oth.

Amen to that, sweet powers!—
I cannot speak enough of this content,
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
And this, and this, the greatest discords be, [*Kissing her.*
That e'er our hearts shall make!

Iago.

O, you are well tun'd now!
But I'll set down the pegs that make this musick,
As honest as I am. [*Aside.*

Oth.

Come, let's to the castle.—
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.
How do our old acquaintance of this isle?
Honey, you shall be well desir'd^{*} in Cyprus,
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion,^y and I dote
In mine own comforts:—I pr'ythee, good Iago,
Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers:
Bring thou the master to the citadel;
He is a good one, and his worthiness
Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona,
Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and
Attendants.*

^{*} — well desired—] i. e. Much solicited by invitation.—STEEVENS.

^y I prattle out of fashion.] Out of method, without any settled order of discourse.—JOHNSON.

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant as (they say) base men, being in love, have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them,—list me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court of guard:^z—First, I must tell thee this—Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him! why, 'tis not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger—thus,^a and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her fantastical lies: And will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be,—again to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite,—loveliness in favour; sympathy in years, manners, and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in: Now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted, (as it is a most pregnant and unforced position,) who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune, as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable, than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: A slippery and subtle knave; a finder out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself: A devilish knave! besides, the knave is handsome, young; and hath all those requisites in him, that folly and green minds^b look after: A pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her; she is full of most blessed condition.^c

^z — the court of guard:] i. e. The place where the guard musters.—STEEVENS.

^a Lay thy finger—thus,] On thy mouth, to stop it while thou art listening to a wiser man.—JOHNSON.

^b — green minds—] Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed.—JOHNSON.

^c — condition.] Disposition of mind.

Iago. Blessed fig's end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor: Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand; an index, and obscure prologue^d to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: Pish!—But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not;—I'll not be far from you: Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting^e his discipline; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden^f in choler; and, haply, with his truncheon may strike at you: Provoke him, that he may: for, even out of that, will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again,^g but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them;^h and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu.

[*Exit.*

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;

^d — an index, and obscure prologue—] The indices were formerly prefixed to books.—MALONE.

^e — tainting—] Throwing a slur upon his discipline.—JOHNSON.

^f — sudden—] Precipitately violent.

^g — whose qualification shall come, &c.] Whose resentment shall not be so qualified or tempered, as to be well tasted, as not to retain some bitterness. The phrase is harsh, at least to our ears.—JOHNSON.

^h — to prefer them;] i. e. To advance them.

That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit:
 The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not,—
 Is of a constant, loving, noble nature;
 And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona
 A most dear husband. Now I do love her too;
 Not out of absolute lust, (though, peradventure,
 I stand accountant for as great a sin,)
 But partly led to diet my revenge,
 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
 Hath leap'd into my seat: the thought whereof
 Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;ⁱ
 And nothing can or shall content my soul,
 Till I am even with him, wife for wife;
 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,—
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash^k
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb.^m—
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confus'd;
 Knavery's plain face is never seen,ⁿ till us'd. [Exit.

ⁱ — like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;] This is philosophical. Mineral poisons kill by corrosion.—JOHNSON.

^k — whom I trash—] To trash, is still a hunter's phrase, and signifies to fasten a weight on the neck of a dog, when his speed is superior to that of his companions.—STEEVENS.

^l — have—on the hip;] The phrase is from the art of wrestling.—JOHNSON.

^m — in the rank garb.] i. e. Grossly, without mincing the matter.—STEEVENS.

ⁿ Knavery's plain face is never seen,] An honest man acts upon a plan, and forecasts his designs; but a knave depends upon temporary and local opportunities, and never knows his own purpose, but at the time of execution.—JOHNSON.

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter a Herald, with a Proclamation ; People following.

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere^a perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph : some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him ; for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptials : So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open ;^p and there is full liberty of feasting, from this present hour of five, till the bell hath told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello !

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants.

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night :
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to out-sport discretion.

Cas. Iago hath discretion what to do ;
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
Will I look to't.

Oth. Iago is most honest.
Michael, good night : To-morrow, with our earliest,
Let me have speech with you.—Come, my dear love,
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue ;

[To DESDEMONA.

That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you.—

Good night. *[Exeunt OTH. DES. and Attend.*

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago : We must to the watch.

^a — mere—] In this place signifies entire.

^p All offices are open ;] i. e. All rooms, or places, in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared, or served out.—STEEVENS.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant ; 'tis not yet ten o'clock : Our general cast us^a thus early, for the love of his Desdemona ; whom let us not therefore blame ; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her : and she is sport for Jove.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has ! methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye ; and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarm to love ?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets ! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoop of wine : and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of the black Othello.

Cas. Not, to-night, good Iago ; I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking : I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O, they are our friends ; but one cup : I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified^r too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here : I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man ! 'tis a night of revels ; the gallants desire it.

Cas. Where are they ?

Iago. Here at the door ; I pray you call them in.

Cas. I'll do't ; but it dislikes me. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool, Roderigo,
Whom love has turn'd almost the wrong side outward,
To Desdemona hath to-night carous'd
Potations pottle deep ; and he's to watch :

^a — cast us—] i. e. Dismissed us, or got rid of our company.—STEEVENS.

^r — craftily qualified—] Shilly mixed with water.—JOHNSON.

Three lads of Cyprus,—noble swelling spirits,
 That hold their honours in a wary distance,
 The very elements^a of this warlike isle,—
 Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
 And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunk—
 Am I to put our Cassio in some action [ards,
 That may offend the isle:—But here they come:
 If consequence do but approve my dream,^t
 My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO, with him MONTANO, and Gentlemen.

Cas. 'Fore heaven, they have given me a rouse^u already.

Mon. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho!

And let me the canakin clink, clink; [Sings.

And let me the canakin clink;

A soldier's a man:

A life's but a span;

Why then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys! [Wine brought in.

Cas. 'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

Iago. I learned it in England, where (indeed) they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander,—Drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk: he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

Cas. To the health of our general.

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.*

Iago. O sweet England!

^a *The very elements*—] As quarrelsome as the *discordia semina rerum*; as quick in opposition as fire and water.—JOHNSON.

^t *If consequence do but approve my dream,*] Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream*.—JOHNSON.

^u — *a rouse*,] i. e. *A bumper, a large glass*.—NARES.

^{*} — *I'll do you justice*.] i. e. *Drink as much as you do*.—STEVENS.

*King Stephen was a worthy peer,^y
 His breeches cost him but a crown;
 He held them sixpence all too dear,
 With that he call'd the tailor—lown.^z*

*He was a wight of high renown,
 And thou art but of low degree:
 'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
 Then take thine auld cloak about thee.*

Some wine, ho!

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear it again?

Cas. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place, that does those things.—Well,—Heaven's above all; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part,—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient;—this is my right hand, and this is my left hand:—I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well, then: you must not think then that I am drunk. [Exit.]

Mon. To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow, that is gone before;—
 He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar,
 And give direction: and do but see his vice;
 'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,

^y — a worthy peer,] i. e. A worthy lord; a title frequently bestowed upon kings in our old romances. These two stanzas are taken from an old song, which the reader will find in *Percy's Relicks of Ancient Poetry*.—RITSON and JOHNSON.

^z — lown.] i. e. Sorry fellow.

The one as long as the other: 'tis pity of him.
I fear, the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep:
He'll watch the horologe a double set,
If drink rock not his cradle.^a

Mon. It were well,
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps, he sees it not; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils; Is not this true?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. How now, Roderigo? [*Aside.*
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. [*Exit RODERIGO.*

Mon. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place, as his own second,
With one of an ingraft infirmity:^b
It were an honest action, to say
So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil. But hark! what noise?
[*Cry within,—Help! help!*

Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue! you rascal!

Mon. What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cas. A knave!—teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.^c

Rod. Beat me!

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue?
[*Striking RODERIGO.*

^a *He'll watch the horologe a double set, &c.*] If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours.—STEEVENS.

^b ——— *ingraft infirmity;*] An infirmity rooted, settled in his constitution.—JOHNSON.

^c ——— *into a twiggen bottle.*] i. e. *A wickered bottle.*—STEEVENS.

Mon.

Nay, good lieutenant;
[*Staying him.*]

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas.

Let me go, sir,

Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

Mon.

Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk!

[*They fight.*]

Iago. Away, I say! go out, and cry—a mutiny.

[*Aside to ROD. who goes out.*]

Nay, good lieutenant,—alas, gentlemen,—

Help, ho!—Lieutenant,—sir,—Montano,—sir;

Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch, indeed!

[*Bell rings.*]

Who's that that rings the bell?—Diablo,^d ho!

The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant! hold;

You will be sham'd for ever.

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth.

What is the matter here?

Mon. I bleed still, I am hurt to the death;—he dies.^e

Oth. Hold, for your lives.

Iago. Hold, hold, lieutenant,—sir, Montano,—gentle-
Have you forgot all sense of place and duty? [men,—
Hold, hold! the general speaks to you; hold, for shame!

Oth. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?

Are we turn'd Turks; and to ourselves do that,

Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

For christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:

He that stirs next to carve for his own rage,

Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.—

Silence that dreadful bell, it frights the isle

From her propriety.^f—What is the matter, masters?—

Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,

Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

^d — *Diablo,*] A contraction of *Diavolo*, the Italian word for *Devil*.—
M. MASON.

^e *He dies.*] i. e. *He shall die.*

^f — *propriety.*—] i. e. *Regular and proper state.* The ringing the bell, which is mentioned above, was a common practice formerly when any great affray happened in a town. At Paris the *Tocsin* is still rung as often as fires or disturbances break out.—MALONE and STEEVENS.

Iago. I do not know;—friends all but now, even now,
In quarter,^g and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed: and then, but now,
(As if some planet had unwitting men,)
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish odds;
And 'would in action glorious I had lost
These legs, that brought me to a part of it!

Oth. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

Cas. I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
The gravity and stillness of your youth
The world hath noted, and your name is great
In mouths of wisest censure; What's the matter,
That you unlace^h your reputation thus,
And spend your rich opinion, for the name
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger;
Your officer, Iago, can inform you—
While I spare speech, which something now offends me;—
Of all that I do know: nor know I aught
By me that's said or done amiss this night;
Unless self-charity be sometime a vice;
And to defend ourselves it be a sin,
When violence assails us.

Oth. Now, by heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgment collied,ⁱ
Assays to lead the way: If I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on;
And he that is approv'd^k in this offence,
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,—
Shall lose me.—What! in a town of war,

^g *In quarter,*] i. e. *On our station.*

^h ——— *unlace—*] i. e. *Loosen.* Put in danger of dropping; or perhaps, strip off its ornaments.—*JOHNSON.*

ⁱ ——— *collied,*] i. e. *Blackened, deformed.*

^k ——— *approv'd—*] That is, *convicted by proof.*

Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
 To manage private and domestick quarrel,
 In night, and on the court and guard of safety !
 'Tis monstrous.—Iago, who began it ?

Mon. If partially affin'd,¹ or leagu'd in office,
 Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
 Thou art no soldier.

Iago.

Touch me not so near :

I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,
 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio ;
 Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
 Shall nothing wrong him.—Thus it is, general.
 Montano and myself being in speech,
 There comes a fellow, crying out for help ;
 And Cassio following him with determin'd sword,
 To execute upon him: Sir, this gentleman
 Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause ;
 Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
 Lest, by his clamour, (as it so fell out,)
 The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
 Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
 And Cassio high in oath; which, till to-night,
 I ne'er might say before: When I came back,
 (For this was brief,) I found them close together,
 At blow, and thrust; even as again they were,
 When you yourself did part them.
 More of this matter can I not report:—
 But men are men; the best sometimes forget:—
 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,—
 As men in rage strike those that wish them best,—
 Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, receiv'd,
 From him that fled, some strange indignity,
 Which patience could not pass.

Oth.

I know, Iago,

Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
 Making it light to Cassio:—Cassio, I love thee;
 But never more be officer of mine.—

¹ — *affin'd,* i. e. *Bound to proximity of relationship*; but here it means *related by nearness of office*.—STEEVENS.

Enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not rais'd up;—
I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter, dear?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting; Come away to bed.
Sir, for your hurts,
Myself will be your surgeon: Lead him off.

[To MONTANO, who is led off.]

Iago, look with care about the town;
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.—
Come, Desdemona; 'tis the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife.

[Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.]

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Ay, past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, heaven forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part, sir, of myself, and what remains is bestial.—My reputation, Iago, my reputation.

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more offence in that, than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: You are but now cast in his mood,^m a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog, to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised, than to deceive so good a commander, with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot?ⁿ and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil!

^m — cast in his mood,] Ejected in his anger.—JOHNSON.

ⁿ — speak parrot?] i. e. Talk idly, and without consciousness.

Iago. What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is it possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.—O, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough: How came you thus recovered?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler: As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me, I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange!—Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used; exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think, you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approv'd it, sir.—I drunk!

Iago. You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general;—I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces:—confess yourself freely to her; importune her; she'll help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, that she holds it a vice in her goodness, not to do more than she is requested: This broken joint, between you and her husband, entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against

any lay^o worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love, and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; and, betimes in the morning, I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [Exit CASSIO.]

Iago. And what's he then, that says,—I play the villain?

When this advice is free, I give, and honest,
 Probal^p to thinking, and (indeed) the course
 To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
 The inclining^q Desdemona to subdue
 In any honest suit; she's fram'd as fruitful
 As the free elements.^r And then for her
 To win the Moor,—were't to renounce his baptism,
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—
 His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
 That she may make, unmake, to do what she list,
 Even as her appetite shall play the god
 With his weak function. How am I then a villain,
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,^s
 Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
 When devils will their blackest sins put on,^t
 They do suggest^u at first with heavenly shows,
 As I do now: For while this honest fool
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,

^o — lay—] i. e. *Wager*.

^p *Probal*—] There may be such a contraction of the word *probable*, but I have not met with it in any other book. Yet abbreviations as violent occur in our ancient writers, and especially in the works of Churchyard.—SIEEVENS.

^q — inclining—] i. e. *Compliant*.

^r — as fruitful

As the free elements.] Liberal, bountiful, as the elements, out of which all things are produced.—JOHNSON.

^s — parallel course,] i. e. Course level and even with his design.—JOHNSON.

^t — put on,] i. e. *Instigate*.

^u — suggest—] i. e. *Tempt*.

I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,—
 That she repeals^x him for her body's lust;
 And, by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
 And out of her own goodness make the net,
 That shall enmesh them all,—How now, Roderigo?

Enter RODERIGO.

Rod. I do follow here in the chace, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and, I think, the issue will be—I shall have so much experience for my pains: and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit, return to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they, that have not patience!—
 What wound did ever heal, but by degrees?
 Thou know'st, we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;
 And wit depends on dilatory time.
 Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
 And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio:
 Though other things grow fair against the sun,
 Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe:^y
 Content thyself a while.—By the mass, 'tis morning;
 Pleasure, and action, make the hours seem short.—
 Retire thee: go where thou art billeted:
 Away, I say, thou shalt know more hereafter:
 Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit ROD.*] Two things are to be
 done,—

My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
 I'll set her on;
 Myself, the while, to draw the Moor apart,
 And bring him jump^z when he may Cassio find
 Soliciting his wife:—Ay, that's the way;
 Dull not device by coldness and delay.

[*Exit.*]

^x ——— *repeals*—] That is, *recalls*.

^y *Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe;*] The blossoming or fair appearance of things to which Iago alludes, is the removal of Cassio; as their plan had already blossomed, so there was good ground for expecting that it would soon be ripe.—MALONE.

^z ——— *bring him jump*—] i. e. *Just at the time when*.—STEEVENS.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Before the Castle.*

Enter CASSIO, and some Musicians.

Cas. Masters, play here, I will content your pains.
Something that's brief; and bid—good-morrow, general.^a
[*Musick.*

Enter Clown.

Clo. Why, masters, have your instruments been at Naples, that they speak i'the nose thus?^b

1 Mus. How, sir, how!

Clo. Are these, I pray you, called wind instruments.

1 Mus. Ay, marry, are they, sir.

Clo. O, thereby hangs a tail.

1 Mus. Whereby hangs a tail, sir?

Clo. Marry, sir, by many a wind instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your musick, that he desires you, of all loves,^c to make no more noise with it.

1 Mus. Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any musick that may not be heard, to't again: but, as they say, to hear musick, the general does not greatly care.

1 Mus. We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away:
Go; vanish into air; away. [*Exeunt Musicians.*

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quillets.^d There's a poor

^a — and bid—good-morrow, general.] It is the usual practice of the *vaits*, or nocturnal minstrels, in several towns in the north of England, after playing a tune or two, to cry, "Good-morrow, maister Such-a-one, good-morrow, dame," adding the hour, and state of the weather. It should seem to have prevailed at Stratford-upon-Avon. They formerly used *hautboys*, which are the wind-instruments here meant.—RURSON.

^b — been at Naples, that they speak i'the nose thus?] The venereal disease first appeared at the siege of Naples.—JOHNSON.

^c — of all loves,] This was frequently used as a kind and tender adjuration, instead of the commoner form, *by all means*.—NARES.

^d — quillets.] i. e. *Sly tricks, turns in argument*.—NARES.

piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife, be stirring, tell her, there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: Wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir; if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. [Exit.]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Do, good my friend.—In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been a-bed then?

Cas. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: My suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free. [Exit.]

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.^c

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure;^f but all will soon be well.
The general, and his wife, are talking of it;
And she speaks for you stoutly: The Moor replies,
That he, you hurt, is of great fame in Cyprus,
And great affinity; and that, in wholesome wisdom,
He might not but refuse you: but, he protests, he loves
And needs no other suitor; but his likings, [you;
To take the saf'st occasion by the front,
To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you,—
If you think fit, or that it may be done,—
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

^c — *I never knew*

A Florentine more kind and honest.] Iago was a Venetian, Cassio a Florentine: he means to say, I never experienced more honesty and kindness even in my own countrymen, than in this man.—MALONE.

^f — *your displeasure;] The displeasure you have incurred.—STEEVENS.*

Emil. Pray you, come in ;
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I am much bound to you.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot ;
And, by him, do my duties to the state :
That done, I will be walking on the works,
Repair there to me.

Iago. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

Oth. This fortification, gentlemen,—shall we see't?

Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Before the Castle.

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.

Des. Be thou assur'd, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do ; I know, it grieves my husband,
As if the case were his.

Des. O, that's an honest fellow.—Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. O, sir, I thank you : You do love my lord :
You have known him long : and be you well assur'd,
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politick distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,

Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
 Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
 That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
 My general will forget my love and service.^g

Des. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here,
 I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
 If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
 To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
 I'll watch him tame,^h and talk him out of patience;
 His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
 I'll intermingle every thing he does
 With Cassio's suit: Therefore be merry, Cassio;
 For thy solicitor shall rather die,
 Than give thy cause away.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance.

Emil. Madam, here comes
 My lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay,
 And hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now; I am very ill at ease,
 Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, well,
 Do your discretion. [*Exit* CASSIO.]

Iago. Ha! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say?

Iago. Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not what.

Oth. Was not that Cassio, parted from my wife?

Iago. Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it,
 That he would steal away so guilty-like,
 Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe 'twas he.

^g That policy may either last so long.

Or feed upon, &c.] He may either of himself think it politic to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my re-admission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten.—JOHNSON.

^h *I'll watch him tame,]* Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep, and it is to the management of these that Shakspeare alludes.—STEEVENS.

Des. How now, my lord ?

I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth. Who is't, you mean ?

Des. Why, your lieutenant Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace, or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take ;ⁱ
For, if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,^k
I have no judgment in an honest face :
I pr'ythee, call him back.

Oth. Went he hence now ?

Des. Ay, sooth ; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me ;
I suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemona ; some other time.

Des. But shall't be shortly ?

Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.

Des. Shall't be to-night at supper ?

Oth. No, not to-night.

Des. To-morrow dinner then ?

Oth. I shall not dine at home ;
I meet the captains at the citadel.

Des. Why then, to-morrow night ; or Tuesday morn ;
Or Tuesday noon, or night ; or Wednesday morn ;—
I pray thee, name the time ; but let it not
Exceed three days : in faith, he's penitent ;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason,
(Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of their best,^l) is not almost a fault
To incur a private check : When shall he come ?
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,
What you could ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering^m on. What ! Michael Cassio,

ⁱ — reconciliation take ;] i. e. Accept the submission which he makes in order to be reconciled.—JOHNSON.

^k — cunning,] For knowledge.

^l — the wars must make examples

Out of their best,] The severity of military discipline must not spare the best men of their army, when their punishment may afford a wholesome example.—JOHNSON.

^m — mammering—] i. e. Hesitating, standing in suspense.

That came a wooing with you ; and many a time,
 When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
 Hath ta'en your part ; to have so much to do
 To bring him in ! Trust me, I could do much,—

Oth. Pr'ythee, no more : let him come when he will ;
 I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon ;
 'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
 Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm ;
 Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
 To your own person : Nay, when I have a suit,
 Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
 It shall be full of poizeⁿ and difficulty,
 And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing :
 Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
 To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you ? no : Farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona : I will come to thee
 straight.

Des. Emilia, come :—Be it as your fancies teach you ;
 Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [*Exit, with EMILIA.*]

Oth. Excellent wretch !^o Perdition catch my soul,
 But I do love thee ! and when I love thee not,
 Chaos is come again.

Iago. My noble lord,—

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago ?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
 Know of your love ?

Oth. He did, from first to last : Why dost thou ask ?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought ;
 No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago ?

Iago. I did not think, he had been acquainted with her.

Oth. O, yes ; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed ?

ⁿ — poize—] i. e. *Weight*.

^o — wretch !] This word is still, in some parts of England, a term of the softest and fondest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection.—JOHNSON.

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed:—Discern'st thou aught in that?

Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Oth. Ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord?

Oth. Think, my lord!

By heaven, he echoes me,

As if there were some monster in his thought

Too hideous to be shown.—Thou dost mean something:

I heard thee say but now,—Thou lik'dst not that,

When Cassio left my wife; What did'st not like?

And, when I told thee—he was of my counsel

In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst, *Indeed?*

And did'st contract and purse thy brow together,

As if thou then had'st shut up in thy brain

Some horrible conceit: If thou dost love me,

Show me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think, thou dost;

And,—for I know thou art full of love and honesty,

And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,—

Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:

For such things, in a false disloyal knave,

Are tricks of custom; but, in a man that's just,

They are close denotements, working from the heart,

That passion cannot rule.^v

Iago. For Michael Cassio,—

I dare be sworn, I think that he is honest.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem;

Or, those that be not, 'would they might seem none!

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

^v They are close denotements, working from the heart,

That passion cannot rule,] i. e. Indications, or discoveries, not openly revealed, but involuntarily working from the heart, which cannot rule and suppress its feelings.—MALONE.

Iago. Why then,
I think, that Cassio is an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this:
I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate; and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

Iago. Good my lord, pardon me;
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts? Why, say, they are vile and false,—
As where's that palace, whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets, and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful?

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you,—
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,^a
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses; and, oft, my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,—I entreat you then,
From one that so imperfectly conjects,^r
You'd take no notice; nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance:—
It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name, in man, and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, no-
thing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he, that filches from me my good name,

^a — vicious in my guess,] i. e. Apt to put the worst construction on every thing
he attempts to account for.

^r — conjects,] i. e. Conjecture; a word used by other writers.—
STEEVENS.

Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By heaven, I'll know thy thought.

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Oth. Ha!

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green ey'd monster, which doth make^s
The meat it feeds on: That cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!

Oth. O misery!

Iago. Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough;
But riches, fineless,^t is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor:—
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

Oth. Why! why is this?
Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon,
With fresh suspicions? No: to be once in doubt,
Is—once to be resolv'd: Exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate^u and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference.^x 'Tis not to make me jealous,
To say—my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me: No, Iago;
I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;

^s — make—] The emendation of Hanmer, and followed by Johnson and Malone; the old copies read *mocke*.

^t — fineless,] *Unbounded, endless, unnumbered*.

^u — exsufflicate—] i. e. *Contemptible, abominable*; from *exsufflare*, low Lat. —Nares' Glossary.

^x — blown surmises,

Matching thy inference.] That is,—such as you have mentioned in describing the torments of jealousy.—M. MASON.

And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy.

Iago. I am glad of this ; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit : therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me :—I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;
Wear your eye—thus, not jealous, nor secure :
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty^y be abus'd ; look to't :
I know our country disposition well ;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands ; their best con-
science
Is—not to leave undone, but keep unknown.

Oth. Dost thou say so ?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you ;
And, when she seem'd^z to shake, and fear your looks,
She lov'd them most.

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then ;
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak,^a
He thought, 'twas witchcraft :—but I am much to
blame ;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.

Oth. I am bound to thee for ever.

^y — self-bounty—] For inherent generosity.

^z And, when she seem'd—] This and the following argument of Iago ought to be deeply impressed on every reader. Deceit and falsehood, whatever conveniences they may for a time promise or produce, are, in the sum of life, obstacles to happiness. Those, who profit by the cheat, distrust the deceiver, and the act by which kindness is sought, puts an end to confidence.

The same objection may be made with a lower degree of strength against the imprudent generosity of disproportionate marriages. When the first heat of passion is over, it is easily succeeded by suspicion, that the same violence of inclination, which caused one irregularity, may stimulate to another ; and those who have shewn, that their passions are too powerful for their prudence, will, with very slight appearances against them, be censured, as not very likely to restrain them by their virtue.—JOHNSON.

^a To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak,] The oak is the most close-grained wood of general use in England. Close as oak, means close as the grain of oak. To seel is an expression from falconry.—STEEVENS.

Iago. I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. Trust me, I fear it has.

I hope, you will consider, what is spoke
Comes from my love ;—But, I do see you are mov'd :—
I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues,^b nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success^c
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend :—
My lord, I see you are mov'd.

Oth. No, not much mov'd :—
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so ! and long live you to think so !

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself,—

Iago. Ay, there's the point:—As,—to be bold with
Not to affect many proposed matches, [you,—
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree ;
Whereeto, we see, in all things nature tends :
Foh ! one may smell, in such, a will^d most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.—
But pardon me ; I do not, in position,
Distinctly speak of her : though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And (happily) repent.

Oth. Farewell, Farewell :
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more ;
Set on thy wife to observe : Leave me, Iago.

Iago. My lord, I take my leave. [Going.]

Oth. Why did I marry ?—This honest creature, doubt-
less,

Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. My lord, I would, I might entreat your honour

^b — issues,] For conclusions.

^c — success—] i. e. Consequence or event ; as *successo* is used in Italian.—
JOHNSON.

^d — will—] For wilfulness. It is so used by Ascham. A rank will, is self-
will overgrown and exuberant.—JOHNSON.

To scan this thing no further ; leave it to time :
 And though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
 (For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
 Yet, if you please to hold him off a while,
 You shall by that perceive him and his means :^e
 Note, if your lady strain his entertainment^f
 With any strong or vehement importunity ;
 Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears,
 (As worthy cause I have, to fear—I am,)
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

Oth. Fear not my government.^g

Iago. I once more take my leave.

[*Exit.*

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
 And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,^h
 Of human dealings : If I do prove her haggard,ⁱ
 Though that her jesses^k were my dear heart-strings,
 I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
 To prey at fortune.^l Haply, for I am black ;
 And have not those soft parts of conversation^m
 That chamberersⁿ have : Or, for I am declin'd
 Into the vale of years ;—yet that's not much ;—
 She's gone ; I am abus'd ; and my relief
 Must be—to loath her. O curse of marriage,
 That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
 And not their appetites ! I had rather be a toad,

^e *You shall by that perceive him and his means :*] You shall discover whether he thinks his best means, his most powerful interest, is by the solicitation of your lady.—JOHNSON.

^f —strain his entertainment—] Press hard his re-admission to his pay and office. Entertainment was the military term for admission of soldiers.—JOHNSON.

^g *Fear not my government.*] Do not distrust my ability to contain my passion.—JOHNSON.

^h —a learned spirit,] Learned for experienced. The construction is, He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings.—WARBURTON and JOHNSON.

ⁱ —haggard,] i. e. A wild hawk, unreclaimed or irreclaimable.—JOHNSON.

^k —jesses—] i. e. Short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist.—HANMER.

^l *I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,*

To prey at fortune.] The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind ; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was let down the wind, and from that time shifted for herself, and preyed at fortune.—JOHNSON.

^m —parts of conversation—] Parts is here synonymous with arts.—REED.

ⁿ —chamberers—] i. e. Men of intrigue.

And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
 For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones;
 Prerogativ'd are they less than the base;
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death;
 Even then this forked plague is fated to us,
 When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:

Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

If she be false, O, then, heaven mocks itself!^o—
 I'll not believe it.

Des. How now, my dear Othello?
 Your dinner, and the generous^p islanders
 By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why is your speech so faint? are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again:
 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
 It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin is too little;
[He puts the Handkerchief from him, and it drops.]

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[Exeunt OTH. and DES.]

Emil. I am glad I have found this napkin;
 This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
 My wayward husband hath a hundred times
 Woo'd me to steal it:^q but she so loves the token,
 (For he conjur'd her, she would ever keep it,)
 That she reserves it evermore about her,

^o *If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!—*] i. e. *If she be false, heaven disgraces itself* by creating woman after its own image. *To have made the resemblance perfect, she should have been good as well as beautiful.*—STEEVENS.

^p *—generous—*] i. e. *Noble*: it has here the power of the Latin *generosus*.—STEEVENS.

^q *My wayward husband hath a hundred times*

Woo'd me to steal it:] This and several other passages tend to prove, that a larger space of time is comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include.—JOHNSON and M. MASON.

To kiss, and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,^r
 And give it Iago;
 What he'll do with it, heaven knows, not I;
 I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

Enter IAGO.

Iago. How now! what do you here alone?

Emil. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me?—it is a common thing.

Emil. Ha!

Iago. To have a foolish wife.

Emil. O, is that all? What will you give me now
 For that same handkerchief?

Iago. What handkerchief?

Emil. What handkerchief?
 Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
 That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stolen it from her?

Emil. No, faith; she let it drop by negligence;
 And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.^s
 Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with it, that you have been so
 To have me filch it? [earnest

Iago. Why, what's that to you?
 [Snatching it.

Emil. If it be not for some purpose of import,
 Give it me again: Poor lady! she'll run mad,
 When she shall lack it.

Iago. Be not you known of't;^t I have use for it.
 Go, leave me. [Exit EMILIA.
 I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
 And let him find it: Trifles, light as air,
 Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong

^r — ta'en out,] That is, copied. Her first thoughts are, to have a copy made of it for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona. But the sudden coming in of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution, to please him.—BLACKSTONE.

^s — to the advantage, &c.] I being opportunely here, took it up.—JOHNSON.

^t Be not you known of't;] i. e. Seem as if you knew nothing of the matter.
 —STEEVENS.

As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison :—
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which, at the first, are scarce found to distaste ;
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.—I did say so :—^u

Enter OTHELLO.

Look, where he comes ! Not poppy, nor mandragora,^x
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst^y yesterday.

Oth.

Ha ! ha ! false to me ?

To me ?

Iago. Why, how now, general ? no more of that.

Oth. Avaunt ! be gone ! thou hast set me on the rack :—
I swear, 'tis better to be much abus'd,
Than but to know't a little.

Iago.

How now, my lord ?

Oth. What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust ?
I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me :
I slept the next night well, was free and merry ;
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips :
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know it ; and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I am sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioneers and all,^z had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known : O now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind ! farewell content !
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue ! O, farewell !
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,

^u *I did say so :*] i. e. I have just said that jealousy is a restless commotion of the mind ; and look where Othello approaches, to confirm the justice of my observation.—STEEVENS.

^x — *mandragora,*] i. e. The *mandrake*. It has a soporifick quality, and the ancients used it when they wanted an opiate of the most powerful kind.

^y — *ow'dst* —] i. e. To *owe* is here, as in many other places, to *possess*.

^z *Pioneers and all,*] That is, the most abject and vilest of the camp. Pioneers were generally degraded soldiers, appointed to the office of pioneer, as a punishment for misbehaviour.—GROSS.

The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
 The royal banner ; and all quality,
 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war !
 And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
 The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
 Farewell ! Othello's occupation's gone !

Iago. Is it possible ?—My lord, ——

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore ;
 Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof ;

[Taking him by the Throat.]

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
 Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
 Than answer my wak'd wrath.

Iago. Is it come to this ?

Oth. Make me to see it ; or (at the least) so prove it,
 That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
 To hang a doubt on : or, woe upon thy life !

Iago. My noble lord, ——

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
 Never pray more : abandon all remorse ;^a
 On horror's head horrors accumulate :
 Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amaz'd,
 For nothing canst thou to damnation add,
 Greater than that.

Iago. O grace ! O heaven defend me !

Are you a man ? have you a soul, or sense ?—
 God be wi' you ; take mine office.—O wretched fool,
 That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice !—
 O monstrous world ! Take note, take note, O world,
 To be direct and honest, is not safe.—
 I thank you for this profit ; and, from hence,
 I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay, stay :—Thou should'st be honest.

Iago. I should be wise ; for honesty's a fool,
 And loses that it works for.

Oth. By the world,

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not ;
 I think that thou art just, and think thou art not ;
 I'll have some proof : Her name, that was as fresh

^a —— all remorse ;]—here means all tenderness of nature, all pity.

As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
As mine own face.—If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it.—Would, I were satisfied!

Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion :
I do repent me, that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?

Oth. Would! nay, I will.

Iago. And may: But, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
Behold her tupp'd?

Oth. Death and damnation! O!

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: Damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible, you should see this,
Were they as prime^b as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation, and strong circumstances,—
Which lead directly to the door of truth,—
Will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

Oth. Give me a living reason^c she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office:
But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,—
Prick'd to it by foolish honesty and love,—
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs;
One of this kind is Cassio:
In sleep I heard him say,—*Sweet Desdemona,*
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves!
And then, sir, would he gripe, and wring my hand,

^b — prime —] i. e. Prompt.

^c — a living reason —] i. e. A reason founded on fact and experience.—
MALONE.

Cry,—*O, sweet creature!* and then kiss me hard,
 As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
 That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
 Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then
 Cry'd,—*Cursed fate! that gave thee to the Moor!*

Oth. O monstrous! monstrous!

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion;^d
 'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
 That do demonstrate thinly.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;^e
 She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,—
 Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
 Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand?

Oth. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

Iago. I know not that: but such a handkerchief,
 (I am sure it was your wife's), did I to-day
 See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that,—

Iago. If it be that, or any that was her's,
 It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

Oth. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives;
 One is too poor, too weak for my revenge!
 Now do I see 'tis true.—Look here, Iago;
 All my fond love thus I do blow to heaven:
 'Tis gone.—

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
 Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,^f
 To tyrannous hate! swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
 For 'tis of aspicks' tongues!^g

Iago. Pray, be content.

Oth. O, blood, Iago, blood!

^d — a foregone conclusion;] A conclusion in Shakspeare's time meant an experiment or trial.—MALONE.

^e — yet we see nothing done;] An oblique and secret mock at Othello's saying,—Give me ocular proof.—WARBURTON.

^f — hearted throne,] Hearted throne, is the heart on which thou wast enthroned.—JOHNSON.

^g — Swell, bosom, &c.] i. e. Swell, because thy fraught is of poison.—WARBURTON.

Iago. Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may change.

Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontick sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontick, and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable^h and wide revenge
Swallow them up.—Now, by yond' marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [Kneels.
I here engage my words.

Iago. Do not rise yet.— [Kneels.
Witness, you ever-burning lights above!
You elements that clip us round about!
Witness, that here Iago doth give up
The executionⁱ of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody work soever.^k

Oth. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say,
That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead; 'tis done, at your request:
But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own for ever. [Exeunt.

^h — capable —] i. e. Capacious, comprehensive.

ⁱ — execution —] i. e. Employment or exercise.

^k — let him command,

And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody work soever.] Iago devotes himself to wronged Othello, and says, Let him command whatever bloody business, and in me it shall be an act, not of cruelty, but of tenderness, to obey him: not of malice to others, but of tenderness for him.—JOHNSON.

SCENE IV.

*The same.**Enter* DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Clown.

Des. Do you know, sirrah, where lieutenant Cassio lies?

Clo. I dare not say, he lies any where.

Des. Why, man?

Clo. He is a soldier; and for me to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to; Where lodges he?

Clo. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

Des. Can any thing be made of this?

Clo. I know not where he lodges; and for me to devise a lodging, and say—he lies here, or he lies there, were to lie in my own throat.

Des. Can you enquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.¹

Des. Seek him, bid him come hither; tell him, I have moved my lord in his behalf, and hope, all will be well.

Clo. To do this, is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [*Exit.*]

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emil. I know not, madam.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse Full of cruzadoes.^m And, but my noble Moor Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness As jealous creatures are, it were enough To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous?

Des. Who, he? I think, the sun, where he was born, Drew all such humours from him.

¹ — and by them answer.] i. e. And by them, when answered, form my own answer to you. The quaintness of the expression is in character.—MALONE.

^m — cruzadoes.] A Portuguese coin, in value three shillings sterling. So called from the cross stamped upon it.—GREY and JOHNSON.

Emil. Look, where he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now, till Cassio
Be call'd to him.—How is't with you, my lord?

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. Well, my good lady:—[*aside.*] O, hardness to
dissemble!—

How do you, Desdemona?

Des. Well, my good lord.

Oth. Give me your hand: This hand is moist, my lady.

Des. It yet has felt no age, nor known so sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal heart;—
Hot, hot, and moist: This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;ⁿ
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand: The hearts, of old, gave hands:
But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.^o

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come now your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck?

Des. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sullen rheum^p offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here, my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

ⁿ — *exercise devout*;] *Exercise* was the religious term.

^o — *our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.*] The new heraldry here spoken of, is the arms of the new dignity of baronets which king James the First, soon after he came to his crown, created for money. They had granted them as an addition to their paternal arms, a hand *gules* in an escutcheon *argent*. The poet insinuates that some then created had hands indeed, but not hearts; i. e. money to pay for the creation, but no virtue to purchase the honour.—WARBURTON.

^p — *sullen rheum* —] That is, a rheum obstinately troublesome.—JOHNSON.

Oth.

That is a fault :

That handkerchief

Did an Egyptian to my mother give ;

She was a charmer, and could almost read

The thoughts of people : she told her, while she kept it,

’Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father

Entirely to her love ; but if she lost it,

Or made a gift of it, my father’s eye

Should hold her loathly, and his spirits should hunt

After new fancies : She, dying, gave it me ;

And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,

To give it her. I did so : and take heed of’t,

Make it a darling like your precious eye ;

To lose or giv’t away, were such perdition,

As nothing else could match.

Des.

Is it possible ?

Oth. ’Tis true : there’s magick in the web of it ;

A sibyl, that had number’d in the world

The sun to make two hundred compasses,

In her prophetick fury sew’d the work :

The worms were hallow’d, that did breed the silk ;

And it was died in mummy,^a which the skilful

Conserv’d of maidens’ hearts.

Des.

Indeed ! is’t true ?

Oth. Most veritable ; therefore look to’t well.*Des.* Then ’would to heaven, that I had never seen it.*Oth.* Ha ! wherefore ?*Des.* Why do you speak so startingly and rash ?^r*Oth.* Is’t lost ? is’t gone ? speak, is it out of the way ?*Des.* Heaven bless us !*Oth.*

Say you ?

Des. It is not lost ; But what an if it were ?*Oth.* Ha !*Des.* I say, it is not lost.*Oth.*

Fetch’t, let me see it.

Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now ;

^a And it was died in mummy, &c.] Mummy is still much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that throws a warmth into their shadows.—
STEEVENS.

^r — rash ?] Is vehement, violent.

This is a trick, to put me from my suit ;

I pray, let Cassio be receiv'd again.

Oth. Fetch me that handkerchief: my mind misgives.

Des. Come, come ;

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth. The handkerchief,——

Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.

Oth. The handkerchief,——

Des. A man that, all his time,

Has founded his good fortune on your love ;

Shar'd dangers with you ;——

Oth. The handkerchief,——

Des. In sooth,

You are to blame.

Oth. Away ! [Exit OTHELLO.]

Emil. Is not this man jealous ?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:

I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man :

They are all but stomachs, and we all but food ;

They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,

They belch us. Look you ! Cassio, and my husband.

Enter IAGO and CASSIO.

Iago. There is no other way ; 'tis she must do't ;
And, lo, the happiness ! go, and impórtune her.

Des. How now, good Cassio ? what's the news with you ?

Cas. Madam, my former suit : I do beseech you,
That, by your virtuous means, I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love,
Whom I, with all the duty of my heart,
Entirely honour ; I would not be delay'd :
If my offence be of such mortal kind,
That neither service past, nor present sorrows,
Nor purpos'd merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit ;
So shall I clothe me in a forc'd content,

And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.^s

Des. Alas ! thrice-gentle Cassio,
My advocacy is not now in tune ;
My lord is not my lord ; nor should I know him,
Were he in favour,^t as in humour, alter'd.
So help me, every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best,
And stood within the blank of his displeasure,^u
For my free speech ! You must awhile be patient :
What I can do, I will ; and more I will,
Than for myself I dare : let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry ?

Emil. He went hence but now,
And, certainly, in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry ? I have seen the cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air ;^x
And, like the devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother ;—And can he be angry ?
Something of moment, then : I will go meet him ;
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

Des. I pr'ythee, do so.—Something, sure, of state,—

[*Exit* IAGO.]

Either from Venice ; or some unhatch'd practice,^y
Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him,—
Hath puddled his clear spirit : and, in such cases,
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so ;
For let our finger ache, and it indues^z

^s *And shut myself up in some other course,*

To fortune's alms.] Being discarded from the military line, he proposes to confine or shut himself up, as he formerly had, within the limits of a new profession.—HENLEY.

^t ——— *favour,*] *Look, countenance.*

^u ——— *within the blank of his displeasure,*] Within the shot of his anger.—JOHNSON.

^x *I have seen the cannon,*

When it hath blown, &c.] In Iago's speech something is suppressed. He means to say, I have seen his ranks blown into the air, and his own brother puff'd from his side,—and meanwhile have seen him cool and unruffled. And can he now be angry ?—MALONE.

^y ——— *some unhatch'd practice,*] Some treason that has not taken effect.—JOHNSON.

^z ——— *indues*—] i. e. *Embrues, tinctures*.—MALONE.

Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense
 Of pain : Nay, we must think, men are not gods ;
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal.^a—Beshrew me much, Emilia,
 I was (unhandsome warrior as I am,)^b
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul ;
 But now I find, I had suborn'd the witness,
 And he's indited falsely.

Emil. Pray heaven, it be state matters, as you think :
 And no conception, nor no jealous toy,
 Concerning you.

Des. Alas, the day ! I never gave him cause.

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so ;
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,
 But jealous for they are jealous : 'tis a monster,
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind !

Emil. Lady, amen.

Des. I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk hereabout :
 If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you, friend Cassio !

Cas. What make you from home ?
 How is it with you, my most fair Bianca ?
 I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
 What ! keep a week away ? seven days and nights ?
 Eight score hours ? and lovers' absent hours,
 More tedious than the dial eight score times ?
 O weary reckoning !

Cas. Pardon me, Bianca ;
 I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd ;

^a — the bridal.] i. e. The nuptial feast : a Saxon word.—STEEVENS.

^b — (unhandsome warrior—] i. e. Evidently unfair assailant.—JOHNSON.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The same.**Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.**Iago.* Will you think so?*Oth.* Think so, Iago?*Iago.* What,

To kiss in private?

Oth. An unauthoriz'd kiss.*Iago.* Or to be naked with her friend abed,
An hour, or more, not meaning any harm?*Oth.* Naked abed, Iago, and not mean harm?It is hypocrisy against the devil:^f

They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,

The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

Iago. So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:

But if I give my wife a handkerchief,—

Oth. What then?*Iago.* Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.*Oth.* She is protectress of her honour too;

May she give that?

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen;

They have it very oft, that have it not:

But, for the handkerchief,—

Oth. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it:—

Thou said'st,—O, it comes o'er my memory,

As doth the raven o'er the infected house,

Boding to all,^g—he had my handkerchief.*Iago.* Ay, what of that?*Oth.* That's not so good, now.

^f — *hypocrisy against the devil:*] i. e. *Hypocrisy to cheat the devil.* As common hypocrites cheat men, by seeming good, and yet living wickedly, these men would cheat the devil, by giving him flattering hopes, and at last avoiding the crime which he thinks them ready to commit.—JOHNSON. According to Warburton, and Steevens, there is an allusion designed to the extraordinary temptations to which the Romish saint D'Arbrissel and bishop Adhelme, are said to have voluntarily exposed themselves.

^g — *boding to all,*—] The raven was thought to be a constant attendant on a house, in which there was infection.—MALONE.

Iago. What, if I had said, I had seen him do you wrong?

Or heard him say,—As knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied^h them, cannot choose
But they must blab——

Oth. Hath he said any thing?

Iago. He hath, my lord; but be you well assur'd,
No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said?

Iago. 'Faith, that he did,—I know not what he did.

Oth. What? what?

Iago. Lie——

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her, on her; what you will.

Oth. Lie with her! lie on her!—We say, lie on her, when they belie her: Lie with her!—that's fulsome.—Handkerchief,—confessions,—handkerchief.—To confess, and be hangedⁱ for his labour.—First, to be hanged, and then to confess:—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion, without some instruction.^k It is not words that shake me thus:—Pish!—Noses, ears, and lips:—Is it possible?—Confess!—Handkerchief!—O devil!— [Falls in a Trance.

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus,
All guiltless meet reproach.—What, ho! my lord!

^h Convinced or supplied—] Convinced is conquered; supplied is supplied, i. e. softened.—STEEVENS.

ⁱ ——— To confess and be hanged—] This is a proverbial saying.

^k ——— without some instruction.] Othello alludes to Cassio's dream, which had been invented and told him by Iago. When many confused and very interesting ideas pour in upon the mind all at once, and with such rapidity that it has not time to shape or digest them, if it does not relieve itself by tears, (which we know it often does, whether for joy or grief,) it produces stupefaction and fainting.

Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shows, that all the proofs are present at once to his mind, which so overpowers it, that he falls into a trance, the natural consequence.—SIR J. REYNOLDS.

I believe that Othello's allusion is to his present and uncommon sensations.—STEEVENS.

Enter CASSIO.

My lord, I say! Othello!—How, now, Cassio?

Cas. What is the matter?

Iago. My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago.

No, forbear:

The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth; and, by and by,
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
He will recover straight; when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you.—

[*Exit CASSIO.*]

How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

Oth. Dost thou mock me?

Iago.

I mock you! no, by heaven:

'Would, you would bear you fortunes like a man.

Oth. A horned man's a monster, and a beast.

Iago. There's many a beast then in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.

Oth. Did he confess it?

Iago.

Good sir, be a man;

Think, every bearded fellow, that's but yok'd,
May draw with you: there's millions now alive,
That nightly lie in those unproper beds,¹
Which they dare swear peculiar; your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,^m
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Oth. O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.

Iago.

Stand you awhile apart;

Confine yourself but in a patient list.ⁿ

Whilst you were here, ere while mad with your grief,

¹ — *unproper*.—] For common.

^m — *a secure couch*,] i. e. A couch in which he is lulled into a false security and confidence in his wife's virtue. A Latin sense.—MALONE.

ⁿ — *list*.] i. e. Barrier, bound.

(A passion most unsuited such a man,) Cassio came hither : I shifted him away, And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy ; Bade him anon return, and here speak with me ; The which he promis'd. Do but encave yourself,^o And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns, That dwell in every region of his face ; For I will make him tell the tale anew,— Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when He hath, and is again to cope your wife ; I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience ; Or I shall say you are all in spleen, And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago ?
I will be found most cunning in my patience ;
But (dost thou hear ?) most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss ;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw ?
[OTHELLO *withdraws*.

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A housewife, that, by selling her desires,
Buys herself bread and clothes : it is a creature,
That dotes on Cassio,—as 'tis the strumpet's plague,
To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one ;—
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
From the excess of laughter :—Here he comes :—

Re-enter CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad ;
And his unbookish jealousy^p must construe
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour,
Quite in the wrong.—How do you now, lieutenant ?

Cas. The worser, that you give me the addition,
Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure o't.
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power, [*Speaking lower*.
How quickly should you speed ?

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff !

^o — *encave yourself,*] Hide yourself in a private place.—JOHNSON.
^p — *unbookish*—] Here used for ignorant.

Oth. Look, how he laughs already! [*Aside.*]

Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue! I think i'faith, she loves me.

Oth. Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out. [*Aside.*]

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?

Oth. Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er: Go to; well said, well said. [*Aside.*]

Iago. She gives it out, that you shall marry her:
Do you intend it?

Cas. Ha, ha ha!

Oth. Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?^a [*Aside.*]

Cas. I marry her!—what? a customer!^r I pr'ythee,
bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwhole-
some. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. So, so, so: They laugh that win. [*Aside.*]

Iago. 'Faith, the cry goes, that you shall marry her.

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. Have you scored me?^s Well.

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is per-
suaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery,
not out of my promise.

Oth. Iago beckons me; now he begins the story. [*Aside.*]

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me in every
place. I was, the other day, talking on the sea-bank
with certain Venetians; and thither comes this bauble;
by this hand, she falls thus about my neck;—

Oth. Crying, O dear Cassio! as it were: his gesture
imports it. [*Aside.*]

Cas. So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales,
and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!—

Oth. Now he tells, how she plucked him to my cham-

^a *Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?*] Othello calls him *Roman* ironi-
cally. *Triumph*, which was a Roman ceremony, brought Roman into his
thoughts. *What*, (says he,) *you are now triumphing as great as a Roman?*—
JOHNSON.

^r — *a customer!*] i. e. *A common woman, one that invites custom.*

^s *Have you scored me?*] Have you made my reckoning? have you settled the
term of my life?—JOHNSON.

ber: O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to. [Aside.

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look, where she comes.

Enter BIANCA.

Cas. 'Tis such another fitchew!^t marry, a perfumed one.—What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief, you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the whole work?—A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There,—give it your hobby horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca? how now? how now?

Oth. By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

[Aside.

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may: an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [Exit.

Iago. After her, after her.

Cas. 'Faith, I must, she'll rail in the street else.

Iago. Will you sup there?

Cas. 'Faith, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come; Will you?

Iago. Go to; say no more.

[Exit CASSIO.

Oth. How shall I murder him, Iago?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

Oth. O, Iago!

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief?

Oth. Was that mine?

Iago. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman, your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

Oth. I would have him nine years a killing:—
A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

^t — fitchew!] i.e. A pole-cut.

Iago Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night; for she shall not live: No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is:—So delicate with her needle!—An admirable musician!—O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear!—Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand, a thousand times:—And then, of so gentle a condition!^u

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain: But yet the pity of it, Iago! —O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes:—Cuckold me!

Iago. O, 'tis foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago; this night:—I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again:—this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Oth. Good, good: the justice of it pleases; very good.

Iago. And, for Cassio,—let me be his undertaker: You shall hear more by midnight. [*A Trumpet within.*]

Oth. Excellent good.—What trumpet is that same?

Iago. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico, Come from the duke; and, see, your wife is with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.

Lod. 'Save you, worthy general!

^u — of so gentle a condition!] i. e. Of so sweet a disposition.—MALONE.

Oth. With all my heart, sir.*

Lod. The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

[*Gives him a Packet.*]

Oth. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[*Opens the Packet, and reads.*]

Des. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signior;

Welcome to Cyprus.

Lod. I thank you: how does lieutenant Cassio?

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

Oth. Are you sure of that?

Des. My lord?

Oth. *This fail you not to do, as you will—*
[*Reads.*]

Lod. He did not call: he's busy in the paper,
Is there division 'twixt thy lord and Cassio?

Des. A most unhappy one; I would do much
To atone^y them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

Oth. Fire and brimstone!

Des. My lord?

Oth. Are you wise?

Des. What, is he angry?

Lod. 'May be, the letter mov'd him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

Des. By my troth, I am glad on't.

Oth. Indeed?

Des. My lord?

Oth. I am glad to see you mad.

Des. How, sweet Othello?

Oth. Devil! [*Striking her.*]

Des. I have not deserv'd this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believ'd in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw it: 'Tis very much;
Make her amends, she weeps.

* — With all my heart, sir.] This does not relate to what Lodovico has just said, but is spoken by Othello while he salutes him.—MALONE.

y — atone—] i. e. Reconcile.

Oth. O devil, devil!

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,²
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile :—
Out of my sight!

Des. I will not stay to offend you.

[*Going.*

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady :—

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress—

Des. My lord?

Oth. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish, that I would make her turn :
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say,—obedient,—
Very obedient:—Proceed you in your tears.—
Concerning this, sir,—O well-painted passion!
I am commanded home :—Get you away :
I'll send for you anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice;—Hence, avaunt!

[*Exit* DESDEMONA.

Cassio shall have my place. And,—sir, to-night,

I do entreat that we may sup together.

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkies!

[*Exit.*

Lod. Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call—all-in-all sufficient?—This the noble nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze, nor pierce?

Iago. He is much chang'd.

Lod. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

Iago. He is that he is; I may not breathe my censure.

² *If that the earth could teem with woman's tears, &c.]* By the doctrine of equivocal generation, new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. Shakspeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts of crocodiles. Each tear (says Othello) which falls from the false Desdemona, would generate a crocodile; the most deceitful of all animals, and whose own tears are proverbially fallacious. *Falls* is here used actively for *lets fall*.—JOHNSON, MALONE, and STEEVENS.

What he might be,—if, what he might, he is not,—
I would to heaven, he were.

Lod. What, strike his wife!

Iago. 'Faith, that was not so well; Yet 'would I knew,
That stroke would prove the worst.

Lod. Is it his use?

Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault?

Iago. Alas, alas!

It is not honesty in me, to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him;
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech: Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lod. I am sorry, that I am deceiv'd in him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO and EMELIA.

Oth. You have seen nothing then?

Emil. Nor ever heard; nor ever did suspect.

Oth. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emil. But then I saw no harm; and then I heard
Each syllable, that breath made up between them.

Oth. What, did they never whisper?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. Nor send you out o'the way?

Emil. Never.

Oth. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor no-
thing?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. That's strange.

Emil. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch hath put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,

There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.

Oth. Bid her come hither :—go.—

[*Exit EMILIA.*

She says enough;—yet she's a simple bawd,
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets :
And yet she'll kneel, and pray; I have seen her do't.

Re-enter EMILIA, with DESDEMONA.

Des. My lord what is your will?

Oth. Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure?

Oth. Let me see your eyes;

Look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this?

Oth. Some of your function, mistress; [*To EMILIA.*

Leave procreants alone, and shut the door;

Cough, or cry—hem, if any body come:

Your mystery, your mystery; nay, despatch.

[*Exit EMILIA.*

Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?

I understand a fury in your words,

But not the words.

Oth. Why, what art thou?

Des. Your wife, my lord, your true

And loyal wife.

Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself;

Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves

Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double-damn'd,

Swear—thou art honest.

Des. Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth. Heaven truly knows, that thou art false as hell.

Des. To whom, my lord? with whom? How am I false?

Oth. O Desdemona!—away! away! away!

Des. Alas, the heavy day!—Why do you weep?

Am I the occasion of these tears, my lord?

If, haply, you my father do suspect,

An instrument of this your calling back,

Lay not your blame on me; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

Oth. Had it pleas'd heaven
To try me with affliction; had he rain'd
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience: but (alas!) to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at,^a—
O! O!

Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd^b up my heart;
Where either I must live, or bear no life;
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
To knot and gender in!—turn thy complexion there!
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin;
Ay, there, look grim as hell!^c

Des. I hope, my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou black weed,^d
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee.—'Would, thou had'st ne'er
been born!

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,

^a — for the time of scorn

To point his slow unmoving finger at,—] I should prefer adopting the emendation of Rowe and M. Mason, and reading,

— for the hand of scorn

To point his slowly moving finger at,—

if such a departure from the old copies were allowable. In explanation of the present reading it can only be said, as Malone has suggested, "that in the clocks of the last age, there was in the middle of the dial plate a figure of time, which was probably in our poet's thoughts when he wrote this passage: and that by *unmoving* he meant by poetic license *not appearing to move*."

^b — garner'd up—] That is, *treasured up*.

^c — turn thy complexion there! &c.] At such an object do thou, *patience*, thyself change colour; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, *look as grim as hell*.—JOHNSON.

^d — black weed,] The insertion of the epithet *black*, i. e. *noxious*, is necessary to the metre, and is taken from the quarto of 1622.

Made to write whore upon ? What committed !
 Committed !—O thou publick commoner !
 I should make very forges of my cheeks,
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,
 Did I but speak thy deeds.—What committed !
 Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks ;
 The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
 Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
 And will not hear it : What committed !
 Impudent strumpet !

Des. By heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth. Are you not a strumpet ?

Des. No, as I am a Christian :

If to preserve this vessel for my lord,
 From any other foul unlawful touch,
 Be—not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Oth. What, not a whore ?

Des. No, as I shall be saved.

Oth. Is it possible ?

Des. O, heaven forgive us !

Oth. I cry you mercy, then :

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
 That married with Othello.—You, mistress,

Re-enter EMILIA.

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
 And keep the gate of hell ; You ! you ! ay, you !
 We have done our course ; there's money for your pains ;
 I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*

Emil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive ?—

How do you, madam ? how do you, my good lady ?

Des. 'Faith, half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord ?

Des. With who ?

Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who is thy lord ?

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none : Do not talk to me, Emilia ;

I cannot weep ; nor answer I have none,
 But what should go by water. Pr'ythee, to-night

Lay on my bed my wedding sheets,—remember ;—
And call thy husband hither.

Emil. Here is a change, indeed.

[*Exit.*

Des. 'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet.
How have I been behav'd, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse ?

Re-enter EMILIA, with IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam ? How is it with you ?

Des. I cannot tell. Those, that do teach young babes,
Do it with gentle means, and easy tasks :
He might have chid me so ; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady ?

Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

Des. Am I that name, Iago ?

Iago. What name, fair lady ?

Des. Such as, she says, my lord did say I was.

Emil. He call'd her, whore ; a beggar, in his drink,
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.*

Iago. Why did he so ?

Des. I do not know ; I am sure, I am none such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep ; Alas, the day !

Emil. Has she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be call'd—whore ? would it not make one weep ?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago. Beshrew him for it !

How comes this trick upon him ?

Des. Nay, heaven doth know.

Emil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,
Some bury and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devis'd this slander ; I'll be hang'd, else.

* — *callet.*] i. e. *A lewd woman* ; so called (says Dr. Grey) from the French *calote*, which was a sort of head-dress worn by country girls.—STEEVENS.

Iago. Fye, there is no such man ; it is impossible.

Des. If any such there be, heaven pardon him !

Emil. A halter pardon him ! and hell gnaw his bones !
Why should he call her, whore ? who keeps her company ?

What place ? what time ? what form ? what likelihood ?
The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave,
Some base notorious^f knave, some scurvy fellow :—
O, heaven, that such companions^g thou'dst unfold ;
And put in every honest hand a whip,
To lash the rascal naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west !

Iago. Speak within door.^h

Emil. O, fye upon him ! some such squire he was,
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool ; go to.

Des. O, good Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again ?
Good friends, go to him ; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel :—
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse or thought,ⁱ or actual deed ;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form ;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will,—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me ! Unkindness may do much ;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say, whore ;
It does abhor me, now I speak the word ;

^f ——— notorious.—] For gross, not in its proper meaning for known.—JOHNSON.

^g ——— such companions.—] Companion, in the time of Shakspeare, was used as a word of contempt, in the same sense as fellow is at this day.—MALONE.

^h Speak within door.] Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house.—JOHNSON.

ⁱ ——— discourse or thought,] The reading of the old copies is *discourse of thought*; the emendation of the text was made by Pope, and defended by Steevens. "The line alludes to the three ways of committing sin mentioned in the Catholic Catechisms, in *thought, word, and deed*."

To do the act that might the addition earn,
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Iago. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour;
The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.

Des. If 'twere no other,—

Iago. It is but so, I warrant you. [*Trumpets.*]

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!

And the great messengers of Venice stay:

Go in, and weep not: all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo?

Rod. I do not find, that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary?

Rod. Every day thou doff'st me with some device,
Iago; and rather (as it seems to me now,) keep'st from
me all conveniency, than suppliest me with the least ad-
vantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure it:
Nor am I yet persuaded, to put up in peace what already
I have foolishly suffered.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Rod. 'Faith, I have heard too much; for your words,
and performances, are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself
out of my means. The jewels you have had from me, to
deliver to Desdemona, would half have corrupted a vo-
tarist: You have told me—she has received them, and
returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect
and acquittance;^k but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis
not very well: By this hand, I say, it is very scurvy; and
begin to find myself fobbed in it.

Iago. Very well.

Rod. I tell you, 'tis not very well. I will make my-
self known to Desdemona: If she will return me my

^k — acquittance;] i. e. *Requitul*.

jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod. Ay, and I have said nothing, but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even, from this instant, do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: Thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but, yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod. It hath not appeared.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appeared; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever,—I mean, purpose, courage, and valour,—this night show it; if thou the next night following enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.¹

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason, and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate, as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean—removing of him?

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me do?

Iago. Ay; if you dare do yourself a profit, and a right. He sups to-night with a harlot, and thither will I go to him;—he knows not yet of his honourable fortune; if

¹ — devise engines—] This seems to mean, contrive racks, tortures, &c.
—RITSON.

you will watch his going thence, (which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one), you may take him at your pleasure; I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high^m supper-time, and the night grows to waste:ⁿ about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Another Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your honour is most welcome.

Oth.

Will you walk, sir?—

O,—Desdemona, ——

Des.

My lord?

Oth. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there; look, it be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants.*

Emil. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

Des. He says, he will return incontinent;
He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.

Emil.

Dismiss me!

Des. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:
We must not now displease him.

^m —— high ——] i. e. Full.

ⁿ —— grows to waste:] i. e. Is wasting apace.

Emil. I would, you had never seen him !

Des. So would not I ; my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns,—
Pr'ythee, unpin me,—have grace and favour in them.

Emil. I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

Des. All's one :—Good faith!^o how foolish are our
minds !—

If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

Emil.

Come, come, you talk.

Des. My mother had a maid call'd—Barbara ;
She was in love ; and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,^p
And did forsake her : she had a song of—willow,
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it : That song, to-night,
Will not go from my mind ; I have much to do,
But to go hang my head^q all at one side,
And sing it, like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, despatch.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown ?

Des.

No, unpin me here.—

This Lodovico is a proper man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des.

And he speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice, who would have walked
barefoot to Palestine, for a touch of his nether lip.

I.

Des. *The poor soul^r sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow ;* [Singing.
*Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow :*

^o — *good faith !*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio, *good father*.

^p — *mad,*] i. e. *wild, inconstant*.

^q — *I have much to do,*

But to go hang my head —] I have much *ado* to do any thing but hang my head.—JOHNSON.

^r *The poor soul, &c.*] This song, in two parts, is printed in Dr. Percy's collection of old ballads ; the lines preserved differ somewhat from the copy discovered by the ingenious collector. The original ballad is the complaint, not of a woman forsaken, but of a man rejected. Some alterations were very properly made when it was accommodated to a woman.—JOHNSON.

The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans ;

Sing willow, &c.

Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones ;

Lay by these :

Sing willow, willow, willow ;

Pr'ythee, hie thee ; he'll come anon.—

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

II.

Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,—

Nay, that's not next.—Hark ! who is it that knocks ?

Emil. It is the wind.

Des. *I call'd my love, false love ; but what said he then ?*

Sing willow, &c.

If I court mo women, you'll couch with mo men.

So, get thee gone ; good night. Mine eyes do itch ;

Doth that bode weeping ?

Emil.

'Tis neither here nor there.

Des. I have heard it said so.—O, these men, these men !—

Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, Emilia,—

That there be women do abuse their husbands

In such gross kind ?

Emil.

There be some such, no question.

Des. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the world ?

Emil. Why, would not you ?

Des.

No, by this heavenly light !

Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light ;

I might do't as well i'the dark.

Des. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the world ?

Emil. The world is a huge thing : 'Tis a great price
For a small vice.

Des. Good troth, I think thou would'st not.

Emil. By my troth, I think I should ; and undo't, when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring;^s nor for measures of lawn; nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition: but, for the whole world,—Why, who would not make her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for the whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'the world; and, having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

Des. I do not think there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen ; and as many
To the vantage,^t as would store the world they play'd for.
But, I do think, it is their husbands' faults,
If wives do fall: Say, that they slack their duties,
And pour out treasures into foreign laps ;
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us ; or, say, they strike us,
Or scant our former having^u in despite ;
Why, we have galls ; and, though we have some grace,
Yet we have some revenge. Let husbands know,
Their wives have sense^x like them : they see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do,
When they change us for others ? Is it sport ?
I think, it is ; And doth affection breed it ?
I think, it doth ; Is't frailty, that thus errs ?
It is so too : And have not we affections ?

^s — a joint-ring ;] The nature of these rings will be best explained by a passage in Dryden's *Don Sebastian* :—

“ — a curious artist wrought them,
With joints so close as not to be perceiv'd ;
Yet are they both each other's counterpart :
Her part had Juan inscrib'd, and his had Zayda.
(You know these names are theirs) and, in the midst,
A heart divided in two halves was plac'd.
Now, if the rivets of these rings inclos'd,
Fit not each other, I have forg'd this lye :
But if they join, you must for ever part.”—STEEVENS.

^t To the vantage,] i. e. To boot, over and above.

^u — our former having —] i. e. Our former allowance of expense.

^x — sense]—here means sensation, sensual appetite.—MALONE.

Desires for sport? and frailty, as men have?
 Then, let them use us well : else, let them know,
 The ills we do, their ills instruct us to.

Des. Good night, good night : Heaven me such usage
 send,
 Not to pick bad from bad ; but, by bad, mend ! [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO.

Iago. Here, stand behind this bulk ; straight will he
 come :

Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home ;
 Quick, quick ; fear nothing ; I'll be at thy elbow :
 It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
 And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand ; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand ; be bold, and take thy sword.
 [*Retires to a little distance.*]

Rod. I have no great devotion to the deed ;
 And yet he has given me satisfying reasons :—
 'Tis but a man gone :—forth, my sword ; he dies.

[*Goes to his stand.*]

Iago. I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the
 sense,^y

And he grows angry. Now whether he kill Cassio,
 Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
 Every way makes my gain : Live Roderigo,
 He calls me to a restitution large
 Of gold, and jewels, that I bobb'd from him,^z
 As gifts to Desdemona ;

^y *I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,*

And he grows angry.] This is a passage much controverted among the editors. A *quat* in the midland counties is a *pimple*, which by rubbing is made to smart, or is *rubbed to sense*. Roderigo is called a *quat* by the same mode of speech, as a low fellow is now termed in low language a *scab*. *To rub to the sense*, is to *rub to the quick*.—JOHNSON.

^z — *bobb'd from him,*] i. e. *Fool'd him out of.* A *bob* formerly signified a mock, or jeer.—MALONE.

It must not be : if Cassio do remain,
 He hath a daily beauty in his life,
 That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor
 May unfold me to him ; there stand I in much peril :
 No, he must die :—But so, I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

Rod. I know his gait, 'tis he ;—Villain, thou diest.
[Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at
 CASSIO.

Cas. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
 But that my coat is better than thou think'st ;
 I will make proof of thine.

[Draws, and wounds RODERIGO.

Rod. O, I am slain !

[IAGO rushes from his post, cuts CASSIO behind
in the leg,^a and exit.

Cas. I am maim'd for ever :—Help, ho ! murder ! mur-
 der ! *[Falls.*

Enter OTHELLO, at a distance.

Oth. The voice of Cassio :—Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am !

Oth. Hark ! 'tis even so.

Cas. O, help ! ho ! light ! a surgeon !

Oth. 'Tis he ;—O brave Iago, honest, and just,
 That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong !
 Thou teachest me,—Minion, your dear lies dead,
 And your fate hies apace :—Strumpet, I come :
 Forth^b of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted ;
 Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted.

[Exit OTHELLO.

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at a distance.

Cas. What, ho ! no watch ? no passage ?^c murder !
 murder !

Gra. 'Tis some mischance ; the cry is very direful.

^a — in the leg,] Iago maims Cassio in the leg, in consequence of what he had just heard him say, from which he supposed that his body was defended by some secret armour.—MALONE.

^b Forth]—signifies both out and from.

^c — no passage ?] No passengers ? nobody going by ?—JOHNSON.

Cas. O help!

Lod. Hark!

Rod. O wretched villain!

Lod. Two or three groans;—it is a heavy night:^d
These may be counterfeits: let's think't unsafe
To come in to the cry, without more help.

Rod. No body come? then shall I bleed to death.

Enter IAGO, with a Light.

Lod. Hark!

Gra. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

Iago. Who's there? whose noise is this, that cries on^e murder?

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did you not hear a cry?

Cas. Here, here; for heaven's sake, help me.

Iago. What's the matter?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same, indeed; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here, that cry so grievously?

Cas. Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!
Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

Cas. I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains!—

What are you there? come in, and give some help.

[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO.*

Rod. O, help me here!

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave! O villain!

[*IAGO stabs RODERIGO.*

Rod. O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!—
O! O! O!

Iago. Kill men i'the dark!—Where be these bloody thieves?—

^d — a heavy night:] A thick cloudy night, in which an ambush may be commodiously laid.—JOHNSON.

^e — cries on —] i. e. Continually cries; the second folio reads, cries out.

How silent is this town! Ho! murder! murder!

What may you be? are you of good, or evil?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Signior Lodovico?

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy; Here's Cassio hurt
By villains.

Gra. Cassio?

Iago. How is it, brother?

Cas. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, heaven forbid!—
Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho? who is't that cry'd?

Iago. Who is't that cry'd?

Bian. O, my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!
O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. O notable strumpet!—Cassio, may you suspect
Who they should be that have thus mangled you?

Cas. No.

Gra. I am sorry to find you thus: I have been to
seek you.

Iago. Lend me a garter: So—O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!

Bian. Alas, he faints:—O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.—

Patience a while, good Cassio.—Come, come;

Lend me a light.—Know we this face, or no?

Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,

Roderigo? no:—Yes, sure; O heaven! Roderigo

Gra. What, of Venice?

Iago. Even he, sir; did you know him?

Gra. Know him? ay.

Iago. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I am glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio?—O, a chair, a chair!

Gra. Roderigo!

Iago. He, he, 'tis he:—O, that's well said;—the chair:—
[*A chair brought in.*]

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;

I'll fetch the general's surgeon.—For you, mistress,

[*To BIANCA.*]

Save you your labour.—He that lies slain here, Cassio,

Was my dear friend: What malice was between you?

Cas. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

Iago. [*to BIAN.*] What, look you pale?—O bear him out
o'the air.— [*CASSIO and ROD. are borne off.*]

Stay you, good gentlemen.—Look you pale, mistress?

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?

Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon:—

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her;

Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. 'Las, what's the matter; what's the matter, hus-

Iago. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark, [band?
By Roderigo, and fellows that are scap'd;
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emil. Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

Iago. This is the fruit of whoring.—Pr'ythee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night:—
What, do you shake at that?

Bian. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake

Iago. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me. [not.

Emil. Fye, fye upon thee, strumpet!

Bian. I am no strumpet; but of life as honest,
As you that thus abuse me.

Emil. As I? foh! fye upon thee!

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd:—
Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale.—

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what has happ'd.—

Will you go on, I pray? This is the night,

That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.^f

[*Aside.*]

[*Exeunt.*]

^f ——— *foredoes—*,] i. e. *Undoes, ruins.*

SCENE II.

A Bedchamber: DESDEMONA in bed, asleep. A Light burning.

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it^s to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.

[Takes off his Sword.

Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then—put out the light!^h
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me:—but once put out thine,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat,
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd thy
I cannot give it vital growth again, *[rose,*
It needs must wither:—I'll smell it on the tree.—

[Kissing her.

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword!—One more, one more.—
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after:—One more, and this the last:
 s sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: This sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes, where it doth love.ⁱ—She wakes—

^s *It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—*

Let me not name it—] The abruptness of this soliloquy makes it obscure. The meaning, I think, is this:—I am here (says Othello in his mind) overwhelmed with horror. What is the reason of this perturbation? Is it want of resolution to do justice? Is it the dread of shedding blood? No; it is not the action that shocks me, but it is the cause, it is the cause, my soul; let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars! it is the cause.—JOHNSON.

^h *Put out the light, and then—put out the light!*] I have adopted the punctuation recommended by Warburton; it makes the passage intelligible without any alteration of the text. If we print the line as it stands in the more recent editions, *Put out the light, and then put out the light*, we ought to read, in the latter clause of the line, “and then put out thy light,” as suggested by Malone.

ⁱ — *This sorrow's heavenly;*

It strikes, where it doth love.] Alluding to “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”—M. MASON.

Des. Who's there? Othello?

Oth. Ay, Desdemona.

Des. Will you come to bed, my lord?

Oth. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

Des. Ay, my lord.

Oth. If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No,—Heaven forefend.—I would not kill thy soul.

Des. Talk you of killing?

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then, heaven
Have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart!

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Humph!

Des. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so: Why I should fear, I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet, I feel, I fear.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They are loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural, that kills for loving.—
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet, I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

Oth. Peace, and be still!

Des. I will so: What's the matter?

Oth. That handkerchief, which I so lov'd, and gave
thee,
Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Des. No, by my life and soul;
Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou'rt on thy death-bed.

Des. Ay, but not yet to die.

Oth. Yes, presently :

Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin ;
For to deny each article with oath,
Cannot remove, nor choke, the strong conception,
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then, Lord have mercy on me !

Oth. I say, amen.

Des. And have you mercy too !—I never did
Offend you in my life ; never lov'd Cassio,
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love : I never gave him token.

Oth. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand.
O perjur'd woman ! thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call, what I intend to do,—
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :^k
I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it then ;
I never gave it him :—Send for him hither,
And let him confess a truth.

Oth. He hath confess'd.

Des. What, my lord ?

Oth. That he hath—us'd thee.

Des. How ? unlawfully ?

Oth. Ay.

Des. He'll not say so.

Oth. No, his mouth is stopp'd ;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order^l for't.

Des. My fear interprets then,—What, is he dead ?

Oth. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas ! he is betray'd, and I undone.

Oth. Out, strumpet ! Weep'st thou for him to my
face ?

Des. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not.

Oth. Down, strumpet !

^k *A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :*] This line is difficult. *Thou hast hardened my heart, and makest me kill thee with the rage of a murderer, when I thought to have sacrificed thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.*

I am glad that I have ended my revisal of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured.—JOHNSON.

— *ta'en order*—] i. e. *Taken measures.*

Des. Kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night.

Oth. Nay, if you strive,—

Des. But half an hour.

Oth. Being done,

There is no pause.

Des. But while I say one prayer.

Oth. It is too late. [*He smothers her.*]

Emil. [*within.*] My lord, my lord! what ho! my lord!
my lord!

Oth. What noise is this?—Not dead! not yet quite dead?
I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.—
So, so.

Emil. [*within.*] What ho, my lord! my lord!

Oth. Who's there?

Emil. [*within.*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word
with you.

Oth. Yes;—'tis Emilia:—by and by.—She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
The noise was high.—Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?
I think, she stirs again:—No.—What's the best?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:
O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

Emil. [*within.*] I do beseech you I may speak with you,
O, good my lord!

Oth. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia:—
Soft,—by and by:—Let me the curtains draw.—
Where art thou? What's the matter with thee now?
[*Unlocks the door.*]

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. O, good my lord, yonder's foul murder done.

^u So, so.] I am of opinion that some theatrical direction has been omitted, and that Othello here stabs her, repeating the two last words as he repeats the blow. Thus Virgil, "*Sic, sic juvat ire sub umbras.*"—STEEVENS.

Oth. What? now?

Emil. But now, my lord!

Oth. It is the very error of the moon;

She comes more near the earth than she was wont;
And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, has kill'd a young Venetian,
Call'd—Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo, kill'd!

And Cassio kill'd?

Emil. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

Oth. Not Cassio kill'd? Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

Emil. Alas! what cry is that?

Oth. That! what?

Emil. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice:—
Help! help, ho! help!—O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O, sweet mistress, speak!

Des. A guiltless death I die.

Emil. O, who hath done

This deed?

Des. Nobody; I myself; farewell:

Commend me to my kind lord; O, farewell. [*Dies.*]

Oth. Why, how should she be murder'd?

Emil. Alas, who knows?

Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so, I must needs report the truth.

Oth. She's like a liar, gone to burning hell;

'Twas I that kill'd her.

Emil. O, the more angel she,

And you the blacker devil!

Oth. She turn'd to folly,ⁿ and she was a whore.

Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Oth. She was false as water.

Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false; O, she was heavenly true!

Oth. Cassio did tup her; ask thy husband else.

ⁿ — *folly,*] i. e. *Depravity of mind.*

^o — *false as water.*] As water that will support no weight, nor keep any impression.—JOHNSON.

O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds,
To this extremity; Thy husband knew it all

Emil. My husband?

Oth. Thy husband.

Emil. That she was false to wedlock?

Oth.

Ay, with Cassio.

Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband?

Oth.

Ay, 'twas he that told me first;

An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emil.

My husband?

Oth. What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy
husband.

Emil. O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!^p—
My husband say, that she was false?

Oth.

He, woman;

I say, thy husband; Dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart;
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth. Ha!

Emil. Do thy worst:

This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth.

Peace, you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,
As I have to be hurt.^q O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed,—
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,

^p — villainy hath made mocks with love!] Villainy hath taken advantage to play upon the weakness of a violent passion.—JOHNSON.

^q Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,

As I have to be hurt.] She means to say,—I have in this cause power to endure more than thou hast power to inflict.—JOHNSON.

Though I lost twenty lives :—Help ! help ! ho ! help !
The Moor has kill'd my mistress ; Murder ! murder !

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter !—How now, general ?

Emil. O, you are come, Iago ? you have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

Gra. What is the matter ?

Emil. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man :
He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false :
I know, thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain ;
Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago. I told him what I thought ; and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him, she was false ?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie ; an odious, damned lie ;
Upon my soul, a lie ; a wicked lie :—
She false with Cassio !—Did you say with Cassio ?

Iago. With Cassio, mistress ; Go to, charm your tongue.*

Emil. I will not charm my tongue ; I am bound to speak ;
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed.

All. O heavens forefend !

Emil. And your reports have set the murder on.

Oth. Nay, stare not, masters ; it is true, indeed.

Gra. 'Tis a strange truth.

Mon. O monstrous act !

Emil. Villainy, villainy, villainy !—
I think upon't,—I think,—I smell't ;—O villainy !
I thought so then ;—I'll kill myself for grief.—
O villainy, villainy !

Iago. What, are you mad ? I charge you get you home.

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak ;
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now :
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. O ! O ! O !

[*Hanging over his Wife.*

* — charm your tongue.] i. e. " Apply some power strong as a charm would be, to your tongue ; for nothing less can stop its volubility."—STEEVENS.

* I thought so then:] i. e. At the instant when she gave Desdemona's handkerchief to Iago ; for even then Emilia appears to have suspected it was sought after for no honest purpose, and therefore asks her husband—" What will you do with it ?" &c.—STEEVENS.

Emil. Nay, lay thee down and roar :
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,
That e'er did lift up eye.

Oth. O, she was foul!— [*Rising.*
I scarce did know you, uncle : There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd ;
I know, this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemona ! I am glad thy father's dead :
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain : did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.

Oth. 'Tis pitiful : but yet Iago knows,
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed ; Cassio confess'd it :
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her ; I saw it in his hand ;
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emil. O heaven ! O heavenly powers !

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'Twill out, 'twill out ;—I hold my peace, sir ? no ;
No, I will speak as liberal⁴ as the air ;
Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wise, and get you home.

Emil. I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab his Wife.*
Fye !

Gra.
Your sword upon a woman ?

Emil. O thou dull Moor ! that handkerchief thou
speak'st of,
I found by fortune, and did give my husband ;
For often with a solemn earnestness,
(More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle,)
He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Villainous whore !

⁴ — liberal—] i. e. Free, under no control.

Emil. She give it Cassio! no, alas; I found it,
And I did give't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest.

Emil. By heaven, I do not; I do not, gentlemen:
O murd'rous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

[*IAGO stabs EMILIA, then runs out.*]

Oth. Are there no stones in heaven,
But what serve for the thunder?^a—Precious villain!

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he has kill'd his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay: O, lay me by my mistress' side!

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather; I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.

[*Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO.*]

Oth. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword:—
But why should honour outlive honesty?
Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, can'st thou hear me? I will play the swan,
And die in musick;—*Willow, willow, willow.*—
Moor, she was chaste; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor;
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die,—I die. [Dies.]

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber,
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper;^x—
O, here it is:—Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. [*within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear;
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

^a *Are there no stones in heaven,*

But what serve for the thunder?] i. e. Does heaven reserve its thunder only
make a noise? has it no implements of mischief to punish as well as terrify?
—STEEVENS.

^x — *the ice-brook's temper;*—] Steel is hardened by being put red-hot into
very cold water.—JOHNSON. Pope and Blackstone read, "*Ebro's temper.*"
The waters of the *Ebro* being famous for tempering steel.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

Gra. What is the matter?

Oth. Behold! I have a weapon;

A better never did itself sustain

Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,

That, with this little arm, and this good sword,

I have made my way through more impediments

Than twenty times your stop:—But, O vain boast!

Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.—

Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,

And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.

Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;

Man but a rush against Othello's breast,

And he retires;—Where should Othello go?—

Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!

Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,

This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,

And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?

Even like thy chastity.—

O cursed, cursed slave!—Whip me, ye devils,

From the possession of this heavenly sight!

Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!

Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—

O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?

Dead? O! O! O!

*Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO, carried in a Chair,
and Officers, with IAGO, prisoner.*

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

Oth. That's he, that was Othello; here I am.

Lod. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet;^z—but that's a fable:
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[OTHELLO wounds IAGO.

Lod. Wrench his sword from him.

^y ——— wench!—Originally signified only a young woman.

^z ——— towards his feet;] To see if, according to the common opinion, his feet be cloven.—JOHNSON.

Iago. I bleed, sir ; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither ; I'd have thee live ;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

Lod. O thou Othello, that was once so good,
Fall'n in the practice^a of a cursed slave,
What shall be said to thee ?

Oth. Why, any thing :
An honourable murderer, if you will ;
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy :
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death ?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray you, demand that demi-devil,
Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body ?

Iago. Demand me nothing : What you know, you
know :
From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What ? not to pray ?

Gra. Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which as I think, you know not : Here is a letter,
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo ;
And here, another : the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villain !

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross !

Lod. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too ; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain :
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him,

Oth. O the pernicious caitiff !—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's ?

^a — practice—] i. e. Snare, stratagem.

Cas. I found it in my chamber :
And he himself confess'd, but even now,
That there he dropp'd it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought his desire.

Oth. O fool ! fool ! fool !

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,—
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch ; whereon it came
That I was cast : And even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead,—Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us ;
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his : You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state :—Come, bring him away.

Oth. Soft you ; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it ;
No more of that :—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
Of one, that lov'd not wisely, but too well ;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme ; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Júdean, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe ;^a of one, whose subdu'd eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum : Set you down this :
And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk

^a Like the base Júdean, &c.] Shakspeare seems to allude to *Herod* in the play of *Mariamne* :

“ I had but one inestimable jewel—
Yet I in suddaine choler cast it down,
And dasht it all to pieces.”—FARMER.

Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him—thus. [Stabs himself.]

Lod. O bloody period!

Gra. All, that's spoke, is marr'd.

Oth. I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee;—No way but this,
[Falling upon DESDEMONA.]

Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [Dies.]

Cas. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.

Lod. O Spartan dog,^b
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed; [To IAGO.]
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;—
Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed to you.—To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure^c of this hellish villain;
The time, the place, the torture,—O enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard; and, to the state,
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [Exeunt.^d

^b *O Spartan dog,*] The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind.—HAMMER.

^c — censure—] i. e. Sentence.

^d The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakspeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to enflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous*, yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme*.

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest; ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful

desires to a false friend; and the virtue of Emilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villainies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.—JOHNSON.

THE END.

THE
POEMS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY WRIOTHESLY,

Earl of Southampton, and Baron of Titchfield.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

I KNOW not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burthen : only if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content ; which I wish may always answer your own wish, and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your Honour's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.



VENUS AND ADONIS.

Vilia miretur vulgus mihi flavus Apollo
Poculo Castalia plena ministrat aqua.—OVID.

EVEN as the sun with purple-colour'd face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-check'd Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn;
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-fac'd suitor 'gins to woo him.

Thrice fairer than myself, (thus she began)
The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,
More white and red than doves or roses are;
Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,
And reign his proud head to the saddle-bow;
If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed,
A thousand honey-secrets shalt thou know :
Here come and sit, where serpent never hisses,
And being set, I'll smother thee with kisses.

And yet not cloy thy lips with loath'd satiety,
But rather famish them amid their plenty,
Making them red and pale with fresh variety
Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty :
A summer's day will seem an hour but short,
Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.

With this, she seizeth on his sweating palm,
The precedent of pith and livelihood,
And, trembling in her passion, calls it balm,
Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good :
Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force,
Courageously to pluck him from his horse.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,
Under the other was the tender boy,
Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy;
She red and hot, as coals of glowing fire,
He red for shame, but frosty in desire.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough
Nimble she fastens (O how quick is love!)
The steed is stalled up, and even now
To tie the rider she begins to prove:
Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust,
And govern'd him in strength, though not in lust.

So soon was she along, as he was down,
Each leaning on their elbows and their hips:
Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips;
And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,
"If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open."

He burns with bashful shame; she with her tears
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks;
Then with her windy sighs, and golden hairs,
To fan and blow them dry again she seeks:
He says, she is immodest, blames her 'miss;
What follows more she smothers with a kiss.

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuff'd, or prey be gone;
Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends, she doth anew begin.

Forc'd to content, but never to obey,
Panting he lies, and breathing in her face;
She feedeth on the steam, as on a prey,
And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace,
Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,
So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.

Look how a bird lies tangled in a net,
So fasten'd in her arms Adonis lies;
Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,
Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes:
Rain added to a river that is rank,
Perforce will force it overflow the bank.

Still she entreats, and prettily entreats,
For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale;
Still is he sullen, still he low'rs and frets,
'Twixt crimson shame and anger, ashy pale;
Being red, she loves him best; and being white,
Her best is better'd with a more delight.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;
And by her fair immortal hand she swears
From his soft bosom never to remove,
Till he take truce with her contending tears,
Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all wet;
And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
Like a di-dapper peering through a wave,
Who being look'd on, ducks as quickly in;
So offers he to give what she did crave;
But when her lips were ready for his pay,
He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger in summer's heat
More thirst for drink, than she for this good turn.
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;
She bathes in water, yet in fire must burn:
"Oh pity, 'gan she cry, flint-hearted boy;
'Tis but a kiss I beg; why art thou coy?

I have been woo'd, as I entreat thee now,
Even by the stern and direful god of war,
Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow,
Who conquers where he comes, in every jar;
Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,
And begg'd for that which thou unask'd shalt have.

Over my altars hath he hung his lance,
His batter'd shield, his uncontrolled crest,
And for my sake hath learn'd to sport and dance,
To coy, to wanton, dally, smile, and jest;
Scorning his churlish drum, and ensign red,
Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.

Thus him that over-ru'd, I oversway'd,
Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain:
Strong-temper'd steel his stronger strength obey'd,
Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.
O be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,
For mast'ring her that foil'd the god of fight.

Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,
 (Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red),
 The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine :—
 What seest thou in the ground? hold up thy head;
 Look in mine eye-balls where thy beauty lies :
 Then why not lips on lips, since eyes on eyes?

Art thou asham'd to kiss? then wink again,
 And I will wink, so shall the day seem night;
 Love keeps his revels where there be but twain,
 Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight :
 These blue-vein'd violets whereon we lean,
 Never can blab, nor know they what we mean.

The tender spring upon thy tempting lip
 Shows thee unripe; yet may'st thou well be tasted;
 Make use of time, let not advantage slip;
 Beauty within itself should not be wasted :
 Fair flowers that are not gather'd in their prime,
 Rot and consume themselves in little time.

Were I hard-favour'd, foul, or wrinkled-old,
 Ill-natur'd, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
 O'er-worn, despised, rheumatick and cold,
 Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,
 Then might'st thou pause, for then I were not for thee;
 But having no defects, why dost abhor me?

Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow;
 Mine eyes are gray, and bright, and quick in turning;
 My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow,
 My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning;
 My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
 Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.

Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,
 Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green,
 Or, like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,
 Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen :
 Love is a spirit all compact of fire,
 Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie;
 These foreeless flowers like sturdy trees support me;
 Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky,
 From morn till night, even where I list, to sport me :
 Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be
 That thou shouldst think it heavy unto thee?

Is thine own heart to thine own face affected ?
 Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left ?
 Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,
 Steal thine own freedom, and complain of theft.
 Narcissus so, himself himself forsook,
 And dy'd to kiss his shadow in the brook.

Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
 Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
 Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear ;
 Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse :
 Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty,
 Thou wert begot—to get it is thy duty.

Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed,
 Unless the earth with thy increase be fed ?
 By law of Nature thou art bound to breed,
 That thine may live, when thou thyself art dead ;
 And so in spite of death thou dost survive,
 In that thy likeness still is left alive."

By this, the love-sick queen began to sweat,
 For, where they lay, the shadow had forsook them,
 And Titan, tired in the mid-day heat,
 With burning eye did hotly overlook them ;
 Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,
 So he were like him, and by Venus' side.

And now Adonis, with a lazy spright,
 And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,
 His low'ring brows o'erwhelming his fair sight,
 Like misty vapours, when they blot the sky,
 Souring his cheeks, cries, " Fie no more of love ;
 The sun doth burn my face ; I must remove."

" Ah me, (quoth Venus) young, and so unkind !
 What bare excuses mak'st thou to be gone !
 I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind
 Shall cool the heat of this descending sun ;
 I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs :
 If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears.

The sun that shines from heaven, shines but warm,
 And lo, I lie between that sun and thee ;
 The heat I have from thence doth little harm,
 Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me :
 And were I not immortal, life were done,
 Between this heavenly and earthly sun.

Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel,
 Nay more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth?
 Art thou a woman's son, and can'st not feel
 What 'tis to love? how want of love tormenteth?
 O had thy mother borne so bad a mind,
 She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind.

What am I, that thou should'st contemn me this?
 Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?
 What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?
 Speak, fair; but speak fair words, or else be mute:
 Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,
 And one for interest, if thou wilt have twain.

Fie, lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,
 Well painted idol, image, dull and dead,
 Statue, contenting but the eye alone,
 Thing like a man, but of no woman bred;
 Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion,
 For men will kiss even by their own direction."

'This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,
 And swelling passion doth provoke a pause;
 Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong;
 Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause;
 And now she weeps, and now she fain would speak,
 And now her sobs do her intendments break.

Sometimes she shakes her head, and then his hand,
 Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground;
 Sometimes her arms infold him like a band;
 She would, he will not in her arms be bound;
 And when from thence he struggles to be gone,
 She locks her lily fingers, one in one.

"Fondling, she saith, since I have hemm'd thee here,
 Within the cirenit of this ivory pale,
 I'll be the park, and thou shalt be my deer;
 Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale:
 Graze on my lips; and if those hills be dry,
 Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

Within this limit is relief enough,
 Sweet bottom-grass, and high delightful plain,
 Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,
 To shelter thee from tempest and from rain;
 Then be my deer, since I am such a park;
 No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark."

At this Adonis smiles, as in disdain,
 That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple :
 Love made those hollows, if himself were slain,
 He might be buried in a tomb so simple;
 Fore-knowing well, if there he came to lie,
 Why there love liv'd, and there he could not die.

These lovely caves, these round-enchancing pits,
 Open'd their mouths to swallow Venus' liking :
 Being mad before, how doth she now for wits ?
 Struck dead at first, what needs a second striking ?
 Poor queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,
 To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn !

Now which way shall she turn? what shall she say?
 Her words are done, her woes the more increasing,
 The time is spent, her object will away,
 And from her twining arms doth urge releasing :
 " Pity—(she cries) some favour—some remorse—"
 Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

But lo, from forth a copse that neighbours by,
 A breeding jennet, lusty, young, and proud,
 Adonis' trampling courser doth espy,
 And forth she rushes, snorts, and neighs aloud :
 The strong-neck'd steed, being tied unto a tree,
 Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
 And now his woven girths he breaks asunder,
 The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
 Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder ;
 The iron bit he crushes 'tween his teeth,
 Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up prick'd ; his braided hanging mane
 Upon his compass'd crest now stands on end ;
 His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
 As from a furnace, vapours doth he send :
 His eye, which glisters scornfully like fire,
 Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometimes he trots, as if he told the steps,
 With gentle majesty, and modest pride ;
 Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
 As who would say, lo ! thus my strength is try'd ;
 And thus I do to captivate the eye
 Of the fair breeder that is standing by.

What reckoneth he his rider's angry stir,
 His flattering holla, or his *Stand, I say?*
 What cares he now for curb, or pricking spur?
 For rich caparisons, or trappings gay?

He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
 For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
 In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
 His art with Nature's workmanship at strife,
 As if the dead the living should exceed;
 So did this horse excel a common one,
 In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
 Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide,
 High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
 Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
 Look what a horse should have, he did not lack,
 Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometimes he scuds far off, and there he stares,
 Anon he starts at stirring of a feather;
 To bid the wind a base he now prepares,
 And whē he run, or fly, they knew not whether;
 For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,
 Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd wings.

He looks upon his love, and neighs unto her;
 She answers him, as if she knew his mind:
 Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,
 She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind;
 Spurns at his love, and scorns the heat he feels,
 Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then, like a melancholy male-content,
 He vails his tail, that, like a falling plume,
 Cool shadow to his melting buttocks lent;
 He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume:
 His love perceiving how he is enrag'd,
 Grew kinder, and his fury was assuag'd.

His testy master goeth about to take him;
 When lo, the unback'd breeder, full of fear,
 Jealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,
 With her the horse, and left Adonis there:
 As they were mad, unto the wood they hie them,
 Out-stripping crows that strive to over-fly them.

All swoln with chasing, down Adonis sits,
 Banning his boisterous and unruly beast ;
 And now the happy season once more fits,
 That love-sick Love, by pleading may be blest ;
 For lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong,
 When it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue.

An oven that is stopp'd, or river stay'd,
 Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage :
 So of concealed sorrow may be said ;
 Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage ;
 But when the heart's attorney once is mute,
 The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

He sees her coming, and begins to glow,
 (Even as a dying coal revives with wind),
 And with his bonnet hides his angry brow ;
 Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind ?
 Taking no notice that she is so nigh,
 For all askaunce he holds her in his eye.

O what a sight it was, wistly to view
 How she came stealing to the wayward boy !
 To note the fighting conflict of her hue !
 How white and red each other did destroy !
 But now, her cheek was pale, and by and by
 It flash'd forth fire, as lightning from the sky.

Now was she just before him as he sat,
 And like a lowly lover down she kneels ;
 With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat,
 Her other tender hand his fair cheeks feels :
 His tender cheeks receive her soft hand's print,
 As apt as new fallen snow takes any dint.

O what a war of looks was then between them ?
 Her eyes, petitioners, to his eyes suing ;
 His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them ;
 Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing :
 And all this dumb play had his aets made plain
 With tears, which, chorus-like, her eyes did rain.

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
 A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,
 Or ivory in an alabaster band ;
 So white a friend engirts so white a foe :
 This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,
 Show'd like to silver doves that sit a billing.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began :
 " O fairest mover on this mortal round,
 Would thou wert as I am, and I a man,
 My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound;
 For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,
 Though nothing but my body's bane would cure thee."

Give me my hand, saith he, why dost thou feel it?
 Give me my heart, saith she, and thou shalt have it;
 O give it me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,
 And being steel'd, soft sighs can never grave it:
 Then love's deep groans I never shall regard,
 Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard.

For shame, he cries, let go, and let me go;
 My day's delight is past, my horse is gone,
 And 'tis your fault I am bereft him so;
 I pray you hence, and leave me here alone:
 For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,
 Is how to get my palfrey from the mare.

Thus she replies: " Thy palfrey, as he should,
 Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire.
 Affection is a coal that must be cool'd;
 Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire:
 The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none,
 Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone.

How like a jade he stood, tied to a tree,
 Servilely master'd with a leathern rein!
 But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee,
 He held such petty bondage in disdain;
 Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,
 Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.

Who sees his true love in her naked bed,
 Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,
 But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed,
 His other agents aim at like delight?
 Who is so faint, that dare not be so bold,
 To touch the fire, the weather being cold?

Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy;
 And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,
 To take advantage on presented joy;
 Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach thee.
 O learn to love; the lesson is but plain,
 And, once made perfect, never lost again."

"I know not love (quoth he) nor will I know it,
 Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it;
 'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
 My love to love is love but to disgrace it;
 For I have heard it is a life in death,
 That laughs, and weeps, and all but with a breath.

Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd?
 Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?
 If springing things be any jot diminish'd,
 They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth:
 The colt that's back'd and burthen'd being young,
 Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong.

You hurt my hand with wringing; let us part,
 And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat:
 Remove your siege from my unyielding heart;
 To love's alarm it will not ope the gate.
 Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flattery;
 For where a heart is hard, they make no battery."

"What! canst thou talk (quoth she), hast thou a tongue?
 O would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing!
 Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong;
 I had my load before, now press'd with bearing:
 Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh sounding,
 Earth's deep-sweet music, and heart's deep-sore
 wounding.

Had I no eyes, but ears, my ears would love
 That inward beauty and invisible;
 Or, were I deaf, thy outward parts would move
 Each part in me that were but sensible:
 Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,
 Yet should I be in love, by touching thee.

Say, that the sense of feeling were bereft me,
 And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch,
 And nothing but the very smell were left me,
 Yet would my love to thee be still as much;
 For from the still'tory of thy face excelling
 Comes breath perfum'd, that breedeth love by smelling.

But O, what banquet wert thou to the taste,
 Being nurse and feeder of the other four!
 Would they not wish the feast should ever last,
 And bid suspicion double-lock the door?
 Lest jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,
 Should, by his stealing in, disturb the feast."

Once more the ruby-colour'd portal open'd,
Which to his speech did honey passage yield;
Like a red morn, that ever yet betoken'd
Wreck to the sea-man, tempest to the field,
Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds,
Gust and foul flaws to herdmen and to herds.

This ill presage advisedly she marketh :
Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth,
Or as the wolf doth grin before it barketh,
Or as the berry breaks before it staineth,
Or like the deadly bullet of a gun,
His meaning struck her ere his words begun :

And at his look she flatly falleth down,
For looks kill love, and love by looks reviveth.
A smile recures the wounding of a frown,
But blessed bankrupt, that by love so thriveth !
The silly boy believing she is dead,
Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red ;

And in amaze brake off his late intent,
For sharply he did think to reprehend her,
Which cunning love did wittily prevent :
Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her !
For on the grass she lies as she were slain,
Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks,
He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard ;
He chafes her lips, a thousand ways he seeks
To mend the hurt that his unkindness marr'd ;
He kisses her ; and she, by her good will,
Will never rise, so he will kiss her still.

'The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day :
Her two blue windows faintly she up-heaveth,
Like the fair sun, when in his fresh array
He cheers the morn, and all the world relieveth :
And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,
So is her face illumin'd with her eye.

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fix'd,
As if from thence they borrow'd all their shine.
Were never four such lamps together mix'd,
Had not his clouded with his brows' repine ;
But hers, which through the crystal tears gave light,
Shone like the moon, in water seen by night.

O where am I, quoth she ? in earth or heaven,
 Or in the ocean drench'd, or in the fire ?
 What hour is this ? or morn or weary even ?
 Do I delight to die, or life desire ?

But now I liv'd, and life was death's annoy ;
 But now I dy'd, and death was lively joy.

O thou didst kill me ;—kill me once again ;
 Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,
 Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain,
 That they have murder'd this poor heart of mine ;
 And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,
 But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

Long may they kiss each other, for this cure !
 Oh never let their crimson liveries wear !
 And as they last, their verdure still endure,
 To drive infection from the dangerous year !
 That the star-gazers, having writ on death,
 May say, the plague is banish'd by thy breath.

Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,
 What bargains may I make, still to be sealing ?
 To sell myself I can be well contented,
 So thou wilt buy, and pay, and use good dealing ;
 Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips,
 Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips.

A thousand kisses buys my heart from me ;
 And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.
 What is ten hundred kisses unto thee ?
 Are they not quickly told, and quickly gone ?
 Say, for non-payment that the debt should double,
 Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble ?

Fair queen, quoth he, if any love you owe me,
 Measure my strangeness with my unripe years ;
 Before I know myself, seek not to know me ;
 No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears :
 The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
 Or being early pluck'd, is sour to taste.

Look, the world's comforter, but weary gait,
 His day's hot task hath ended in the West ;
 The owl, night's herald, shrieks, *'tis very late* ;
 The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest ;
 The coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light,
 Do summon us to part, and bid good night.

Now let me say *good night*, and so say you;
 If you will say so, you shall have a kiss.
Good night, quoth she; and, ere he says *adieu*,
 The honey fee of parting tender'd is:

Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;
 Incorporate then they seem; face grows to face.

Till, breathless, he disjoin'd, and backward drew
 The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,
 Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,
 Whereon they surfeit, yet complain on drought:
 He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth,
 (Their lips together glew'd) fall to the earth.

Now quick Desire hath caught her yielding prey,
 And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth;
 Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
 Paying what ransom the insulter willet;—
 Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
 That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,
 With blind-fold fury she begins to forage;
 Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
 And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage;
 Planting oblivion, beating reason back,
 Forgetting shame's pure blush, and honour's wrack.

Hot, faint, and weary, with her hard embracing,
 Like a wild bird being tam'd with too much handling,
 Or as the fleet-foot roe, that's tir'd with chasing,
 Or like the froward infant, still'd with dandling,
 He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,
 While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

What wax so frozen but dissolves with temp'ring,
 And yields at last to every light impression?
 Things out of hope are compass'd oft with vent'ring,
 Chiefly in love, whose leave exceeds commission:
 Affection faints not like a pale-fac'd coward,
 But then woos best, when most his choice is froward.

When he did frown, O had she then gave over,
 Such nectar from his lips she had not suck'd.
 Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover;
 What though the rose have pricks? yet is it pluck'd:
 Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast,
 Yet love breaks through, and picks them all at last.

For pity now she can no more detain him ;
 The poor fool prays her that he may depart ;
 She is resolv'd no longer to restrain him ;
 Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,
 The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,
 He carries thence incaged in his breast.

Sweet boy, she says, this night I'll waste in sorrow,
 For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch.
 Tell me, love's master, shall we meet to-morrow?
 Say, shall we? shall we? wilt thou make the match!
 He tells her, no; to-morrow he intends
 To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.

The boar! (quoth she) whereat a sudden pale,
 Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,
 Usurps her cheeks; she trembles at his tale,
 And on his neck her yoking arms she throws:
 She sinketh down, still hanging on his neck,
 He on her belly falls, she on her back.

Now is she in the very lists of love,
 Her champion mounted for the hot encounter:
 All is imaginary she doth prove,
 He will not manage her, although he mount her;
 That worse than Tantalus' is her annoy,
 To clip Elysium, and to lack her joy.

Even as poor birds, deceiv'd with painted grapes,
 Do surfeit by the eye, and pine the maw,
 Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,
 As those poor birds that helpless berries saw:
 The warm effects which she in him finds missing,
 She seeks to kindle with continual kissing.

But all in vain; good queen, it will not be:
 She hath assay'd as much as may be proved;
 Her pleading hath deserv'd a greater fee;
She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd.

Fie, fie, he says, you crush me; let me go;
 You have no reason to withhold me so.

Thou hadst been gone, quoth she, sweet boy, ere this,
 But that thou told'st me, thou would'st hunt the boar.
 O be advis'd; thou know'st not what it is
 With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,
 Whose tushes never-sheath'd he whetteth still,
 Like to a mortal butcher, bent to kill.

On his bow-back he hath a battle set
Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes ;
His eyes, like glow-worms shine when he doth fret ;
His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes ;
Being mov'd, he strikes what e'er is in his way,
And whom he strikes, his crooked tushes slay.

His brawny sides, with hairy bristles armed,
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter ;
His short thick neck cannot be easily harmed ;
Being ireful, on the lion he will venture :
The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
As fearful of him, part ; through whom he rushes.

Alas, he nought esteems that face of thine,
To which Love's eye pays tributary gazes ;
Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips, and crystal cyne,
Whose full perfection all the world amazes ;
But having thee at vantage (wond'rous dread !)
Would root these beauties as he roots the mead.

O, let him keep his loathsome cabin still ;
Beauty hath nought to do with such foul fiends.
Come not within his danger by thy will ;
They that thrive well, take counsel of their friends.
When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,
I fear'd thy fortune, and my joints did tremble.

Didst thou not mark my face ? Was it not white ?
Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye ?
Grew I not faint ? And fell I not downright ?
Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,
My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,
But, like an earthquake, shakes thee on my breast.

For where love reigns, disturbing jealousy
Doth call himself affection's centinel ;
Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,
And in a peaceful hour doth cry, *kill, kill* ;
Distemp'ring gentle love with his desire,
As air and water doth abate the fire.

This sour informer, this bate-breeding spy,
This canker that eats up love's tender spring,
This carry-tale, dissensions jealousy,
That sometimes true news, sometimes false doth bring,
Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine ear,
That if I love thee, I thy death should fear :

And more than so, presenteth to mine eye
 The picture of an angry-chafing boar,
 Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie
 An image like thyself, all stain'd with gore ;
 Whose blood upon the fresh flowers being shed,
 Doth make them droop with grief, and hang the head.

What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,
 That trembling at the imagination,
 The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed?
 And fear doth teach it divination :
 I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,
 If thou encounter with the boar to-morrow.

But if thou needs will hunt, be rul'd by me ;
 Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,
 Or at the fox, which lives by subtilty,
 Or at the roe, which no encounter dare :
 Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,
 And on thy well-breath'd horse keep with thy hounds.

And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
 Mark the poor wretch to overshut his troubles,
 How he out-runs the wind, and with what care
 He cranks and crosses, with a thousand doubles :
 The many musits through the which he goes,
 Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

Sometime he runs among the flock of sheep,
 To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
 And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
 To stop the loud pursuers in their yell ;
 And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer ;
 Danger deviseth shifts ; wit waits on fear :

For there his smell with others being mingled,
 The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
 Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
 With much ado the cold fault cleanly out ;
 Then do they spend their mouths : Echo replies,
 As if another chase were in the skies.

By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
 Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
 To hearken if his foes pursue him still ;
 Anon their loud alarms he doth hear ;
 And now his grief may be compared well
 To one sore-sick, that hears the passing bell.

Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
 Turn, and return, indenting with the way ;
 Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
 Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay :
 For misery is trodden on by many,
 And being low, never reliev'd by any.

Lie quietly, and hear a little more ;
 Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise :
 To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,
 Unlike thyself, thou hear'st me moralize,
 Applying this to that, and so to so ;
 For love can comment upon every woe.

Where did I leave ?—No matter where, quoth he ;
 Leave me, and then the story aptly ends :
 The night is spent. Why, what of that, quoth she,
 I am, quoth he, expected of my friends ;
 And now 'tis dark, and going I shall fall.—
 In night, quoth she, desire sees best of all.

But if thou fall, O then imagine this,
 The earth in love with thee thy footing trips,
 And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.
 Rich preys make rich men thieves ; so do thy lips
 Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,
 Lest she should steal a kiss, and die forsworn.

Now, of this dark night I perceive the reason :
 Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine,
 Till forging nature be condemn'd of treason,
 For stealing moulds from heaven that were divine,
 Wherein she fram'd thee in high heaven's despite,
 To shame the sun by day, and her by night.

And therefore hath she brib'd the Destinies,
 To cross the curious workmanship of nature,
 To mingle beauty with infirmities,
 And pure perfection with impure defeature ;
 Making it subject to the tyranny
 Of sad mischances and such misery :

As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,
 Life-poising pestilence, and frenzies wood,
 The marrow-eating sickness, whose attaint
 Disorder breeds by heating of the blood :
 Surfeits, impostumes, grief, and damn'd despair,
 Swear nature's death for framing thee so fair.

And not the least of all these maladies,
But in one minute's sight brings beauty under :
Both favour, savour, hue, and qualities,
Whereat th' imperial gazer late did wonder,
Are on the sudden wasted, thaw'd and done,
As mountain-snow melts with the mid-day sun.

Therefore, despite of fruitless chastity,
Love-lacking vestals, and self-loving nuns,
That on the earth would breed a scarcity,
And barren dearth of daughters and of sons,
Be prodigal : the lamp that burns by night,
Dries up his oil, to lend the world his light.

What is thy body but a swallowing grave,
Seeming to bury that posterity
Which by the rights of time thou needs must have,
If thou destroy them not in their obscurity ?
If so, the world will hold thee in disdain,
Sith in thy pride so fair a hope is slain.

So in thyself thyself art made away ;
A mischief worse than civil home-bred strife,
Or their's, whose desperate hands themselves do slay,
Or butcher-sire, that reaves his son of life.
Foul cankering rust the hidden treasure frets,
But gold that's put to use, more gold begets,

Nay then, quoth Adon, you will fall again
Into your idle over-handled theme ;
The kiss I gave you is bestow'd in vain,
And all in vain you strive against the stream ;
For by this black-fac'd night, desire's foul nurse,
Your treatise makes me like you worse and worse.

If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,
And every tongue more moving than your own,
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown ;
For know, my heart stands armed in my ear,
And will not let a false sound enter there ;

Lest the deceiving harmony should run
Into the quiet closure of my breast ;
And then my little heart were quite undone,
In his bed-chamber to be barr'd of rest.
No, lady, no ; my heart longs not to groan,
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

What have you urg'd that I cannot reprove ?
 The path is smooth that leadeth unto danger ;
 I hate not love, but your device in love,
 That lends embracements unto every stranger.
 You do it for increase ; O strange excuse !
 When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse.

Call it not love, for love to heaven is fled,
 Since sweating lust on earth usurps his name ;
 Under whose simple semblance he hath fed
 Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame ;
 Which the hot tyrant stains, and soon bereaves,
 As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

Love comforteth, like sun-shine after rain,
 But lust's effect is tempest after sun,
 Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,
 Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.
 Love surfeits not ; lust like a glutton dies :
 Love is all truth ; lust full of forged lies.

More I could tell, but more I dare not say ;
 The text is old, the orator too green.
 Therefore, in sadness, now I will away ;
 My face is full of shame, my heart of teen ;
 Mine ears that to your wanton talk attended,
 Do burn themselves for having so offended.

With this, he breaketh from the sweet embrace
 Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,
 And homeward through the dark lawns runs apace ;
 Leaves Love upon her back deeply distress'd.
 Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
 So glides he in the night from Venus' eye ;

Which after him she darts, as one on shore
 Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,
 Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,
 Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend ;
 So did the merciless and pitchy night
 Fold in the object that did feed her sight.

Whereat amaz'd, as one that unaware
 Hath dropp'd a precious jewel in the flood,
 Or 'stonish'd as night-wanderers often are,
 Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood ;
 Even so confounded in the dark she lay,
 Having lost the fair discovery of her way.

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,
 That all the neighbour-caves, as seeming troubled,
 Make verbal repetition of her moans;
 Passion on passion deeply is redoubled:
Ah me! she cries, and twenty times, *woe, woe!*
 And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

She marking them, begins a wailing note,
 And sings extemp'rally a woeful ditty;
 How love makes young men thrall, and old men dote;
 How love is wise in folly, foolish-witty:
 Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,
 And still the choir of echoes answers so.

Her song was tedious, and outwore the night,
 For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short:
 If pleas'd themselves, others, they think, delight
 In such like circumstance, with such like sport:
 Their copious stories, oftentimes begun,
 End without audience, and are never done.

For who hath she to spend the night withal,
 But idle sounds, resembling parasites,
 Like shrill-tongu'd tapsters answering every call,
 Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?
 She said, 'tis so: they answer all, 'tis so;
 And would say after her, if she said no.

Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
 From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
 And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
 The sun ariseth in his majesty;
 Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
 That cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow:
 O thou clear god, and patron of all light,
 From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow
 The beauteous influence that makes him bright,
 There lives a son, that suck'd an earthly mother,
 May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other.

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove,
 Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,
 And yet she hears no tidings of her love:
 She hearkens for his hounds, and for his horn:
 Anon she hears them chaunt it lustily,
 And all in haste she coasteth to the cry.

And as she runs, the bushes in the way
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,
Some twine about her thigh to make her stay;
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,
Like a miledo, whose swelling dugs do ache,
Hasting to feed her fawn, hid in some brake.

By this, she hears the hounds are at a bay,
Whereat she starts, like one that spies an adder
Wreath'd up in fatal folds, just in his way,
The fear whereof doth make him shake and shudder:
Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds
Appals her senses, and her spright confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,
But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud,
Because the cry remaineth in one place,
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud:
Finding their enemy to be so curst,
They all strain court'sy who shall cope him first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,
Through which it enters to surprise her heart,
Who overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,
With cold-pale weakness numbs each feeling part:
Like soldiers, when their captain once doth yield,
They basely fly, and dare not stay the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy;
Till, cheering up her senses sore dismay'd,
She tells them, 'tis a causeless fantasy,
And childish error that they are afraid;
Bids them leave quaking, wills them fear no more;—
And with that word she spy'd the hunted boar;

Whose frothy mouth, bepainted all with red,
Like milk and blood being mingled both together,
A second fear through all her sinews spread,
Which madly hurries her she knows not whither;
This way she runs, and now she will no further,
But back retires, to rate the boar for murder.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways;
She treads the paths that she untreads again;
Her more than haste is mated with delays,
Like the proceedings of a drunken brain;
Full of respect, yet not at all respecting,
In hand with all things, nought at all effecting.

Here kennel'd in a brake she finds a hound,
 And asks the weary caitiff for his master;
 And there another licking of his wound,
 'Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster;
 And here she meets another sadly scowling,
 To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling.

When he had ceas'd his ill-resounding noise,
 Another flap-mouth'd mourner, black and grim,
 Against the welkin vollies out his voice;
 Another and another answer him,
 Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,
 Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

Look, how the world's poor people are amazed
 At apparitions, signs, and prodigies,
 Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gazed,
 Infusing them with dreadful prophecies;
 So she at these sad signs draws up her breath,
 And, sighing it again, exclaims on death.

Hard-favour'd tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,
 hateful divorce of love (thus chides she death)
 Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost thou mean
 To stifle beauty, and to steal his breath,
 Who when he liv'd, his breath and beauty set
 Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet?

If he be dead,—O no, it cannot be,
 Seeing his beauty, thou shouldst strike at it—
 O yes, it may; thou hast no eyes to see,
 But hatefully at random dost thou hit.
 Thy mark is feeble age; but thy false dart
 Mistakes that aim, and cleaves an infant's heart.

Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,
 And hearing him, thy power had lost his power.
 The destinies will curse thee for this stroke;
 They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower:
 Love's golden arrow at him should have fled,
 And not death's ebon dart, to strike him dead.

Dost thou drink tears, that thou provok'st such weeping?
 What may a heavy groan advantage thee?
 Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping
 Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see?
 Now Nature cares not for thy mortal vigour,
 Since her best work is ruin'd with thy rigour.

Here overcome, as one full of despair,
She veil'd her eye-lids, who, like sluices, stopp'd
The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair
In the sweet channel of her bosom dropp'd ;
But through the flood-gates breaks the silver rain,
And with his strong course opens them again.

O how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow !
Her eyes seen in her tears, tears in her eye ;
Both crystals, where they view'd each other's sorrow,
Sorrow, that friendly sighs sought still to dry ;
But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,
Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throng her constant woe,
As striving which should best become her grief ;
All entertain'd, each passion labours so,
That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
But none is best ; then join they all together,
Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.

By this, far off she hears some huntsman holla ;
A nurse's song ne'er pleas'd her babe so well :
The dire imagination she did follow
This sound of hope doth labour to expell ;
For now reviving joy bids her rejoice,
And flatters her, it is Adonis' voice.

Whereat her tears began to turn their tide,
Being prison'd in her eye, like pearls in glass ;
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop beside,
Which her cheek melts, as scorning it should pass,
To wash the foul face of the sluttish ground,
Who is but drunken when she seemeth drown'd.

O hard-believing love, how strange it seems
Not to believe, and yet too credulous !
Thy weal and woe are both of them extremes,
Despair and hope make thee ridiculous :
The one doth flatter thee in thoughts unlikely,
With likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

Now she unwaves the web that she had wrought ;
Adonis lives, and death is not to blame ;
It was not she that call'd him all to naught ;
Now she adds honour to his hateful name ;
She clepes him king of graves, and grave for kings,
Imperial supreme of all mortal things.

No, no, (quoth she) sweet Death, I did but jest;
 Yet pardon me, I felt a kind of fear,
 When as I met the boar, that bloody beast,
 Which knows no pity, but is still severe;
 Then, gentle shadow, (truth I must confess)
 I rail'd on thee, fearing my love's decease.

'Tis not my fault: the boar provok'd my tongue;
 Be wreak'd on him, invisible commander;
 'Tis he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong;
 I did but act, he's author of thy slander:
 Grief hath two tongues, and never woman yet
 Could rule them both, without ten women's wit.

Thus hoping that Adonis is alive,
 Her rash suspect she doth extenuate;
 And that his beauty may the better thrive,
 With death she humbly doth insinuate;
 Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs; and stories
 His victories, his triumphs, and his glories.

O Jove, quoth she, how much a fool was I,
 To be of such a weak and silly mind,
 To wail his death, who lives, and must not die,
 Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind!
 For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,
 And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again.

Fie, fie, fond love, thou art so full of fear,
 As one with treasure laden, hemm'd with thieves;
 Trifles, unwitnessed with eye or ear,
 Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves.
 Even at this word she hears a merry horn,
 Whereat she leaps, that was but late forlorn.

As faulcon to the lure, away she flies;
 The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light;
 And in her haste unfortunately spies
 The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight;
 Which seen, her eyes, as murder'd with the view,
 Like stars ashamed of day, themselves withdrew.

Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
 Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
 And there, all smother'd up in shade doth sit,
 Long after fearing to creep forth again;
 So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled
 Into the deep dark cabins of her head,

Where they resign their office and their light
To the disposing of her troubled brain ;
Who bids them still consort with ugly night,
And never wound the heart with looks again ;
Who, like a king perplexed in his throne,
By their suggestion gives a deadly groan.

Whereat each tributary subject quakes ;
As when the wind, imprison'd in the ground,
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,
Which with cold terrors doth men's mind confound :
This mutiny each part doth so surprise,
That from their dark beds, once more, leap her eyes ;

And, being open'd, threw unwilling sight
Upon the wide wound that the boar had trench'd
In his soft flank ; whose wonted lily white
With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drench'd :
No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed,
But stole his blood, and seem'd with him to bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth ;
Over one shoulder doth she hang her head ;
Dumbly she passions, frantickly she doteth ;
She thinks he could not die, he is not dead.
Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow ;
Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly,
That her sight dazzling makes the wound seem three ;
And then she reprehends her mangling eye,
That makes more gashes where no breach should be :
His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled,
For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

My tongue cannot express my grief for one,
And yet, quoth she, behold two Adons dead !
My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,
Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead :
Heavy heart's lead melt at mine eyes, as fire !
So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

Alas, poor world, what treasure hast thou lost !
What face remains alive that's worth the viewing ?
Whose tongue is musick now ? what canst thou boast
Of things long since, or any thing ensuing ?
The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim ;
But true-sweet beauty liv'd and dy'd in him.

Bonnet or veil henceforth no creature wear !
Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you :
Having no fair to lose, you need not fear ;
The sun doth scorn you, and the wind doth hiss you :
 But when Adonis liv'd, sun and sharp air
 Lurk'd like two thieves, to rob him of his fair ;

And therefore would he put his bonnet on,
Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep ;
The wind would blow it off, and, being gone,
Play with his locks ; then would Adonis weep :
 And straight, in pity of his tender years,
 They both would strive who first should dry his tears.

To see his face, the lion walk'd along
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him ;
To recreate himself, when he hath sung,
The tiger would be tame, and gently bear him :
 If he had spoke, the wolf would leave his prey,
 And never fright the silly lamb that day.

When he beheld his shadow in the brook,
The fishes spread on it their golden gills ;
When he was by, the birds such pleasure took,
That some would sing, some other in their bills
 Would bring him mulberries, and ripe red cherries ;
 He fed them with his sight, they him with berries.

But this foul, grim, and urchin-snouted boar,
Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,
Ne'er saw the beauteous livery that he wore ;
Witness the entertainment that he gave ;
 If he did see his face, why then I know,
 He thought to kiss him, and hath kill'd him so.

'Tis true, 'tis true ; thus was Adonis slain ;
He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,
Who would not whet his teeth at him again,
But by a kiss thought to persuade him there
 And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine
 Sheath'd, unaware, his tusk in his soft groin.

Had I been tooth'd like him, I must confess
With kissing him I should have kill'd him first
But he is dead, and never did he bless
My youth with his ; the more I am accurst.
 With this she falleth in the place she stood,
 And stains her face with his congealed blood.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale ;
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold ;
She whispers in his ear, a heavy tale,
As if he heard the woeful words she told :
 She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
 Where lo ! two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies :

Two glasses, where herself herself beheld
A thousand times, and now no more reflect ;
Their virtue lost, wherein they late excell'd,
And every beauty robb'd of his effect :
 Wonder of time, quoth she, this is my spite,
 That, you being dead, the day should yet be light.

Since thou art dead, lo ! here I prophesy,
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend ;
It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet ~~beginning, but unsavoury end~~ ;
 Ne'er settled equally, to high or low ;
 That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud,
And shall be blasted in a breathing-while ;
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd
With sweets, that shall the sharpest sight beguile :
 The strongest body shall it make most weak,
 Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.

It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures ;
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures :
 It shall be raging-mad, and silly-mild,
 Make the young old, the old become a child.

It shall suspect, where is no cause of fear ;
It shall not fear, where it should most mistrust ;
It shall be merciful and too severe,
And most deceiving, when it seems most just ;
 Perverse it shall be, when it seems most toward,
 Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.

It shall be cause of war, and dire events,
And set dissention 'twixt the son and sire ;
Subject and servile to all discontents,
As dry combustious matter is to fire ;
 Sith in his prime death doth my love destroy,
 They that love best, their love shall not enjoy.

By this, the boy that by her side lay kill'd,
Was melted like a vapour from her sight,
And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd,
A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white ;
 Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood
 Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

She bows her head, the new-sprung flower to smell
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath ;
And says, within her bosom it shall dwell,
Since he himself is reft from her by death :
 She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears
 Green dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

Poor flower, quoth she, this was thy father's guise,
(Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire)
For every little grief to wet his eyes :
To grow unto himself was his desire,
 And so 'tis thine; but know, it is as good
 To wither in my breast, as in his blood.

Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast ;
Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right :
Lo! in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night :
 There shall not be one minute of an hour,
 Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower.

Thus weary of the world, away she hies,
And yokes her silver doves ; by whose swift aid
Their mistress mounted, through the empty skies
In her light chariot quickly is convey'd,
 Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen
 Means to immure herself, and not be seen.

THE
RAPE OF LUCRECE.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY WRIOTHESLY,

Earl of Southampton, and Baron of Titchfield.

THE love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater: mean time, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your Lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

THE ARGUMENT.

LUCIUS TARQUINIUS (for his excessive pride surnamed Superbus) after he had caused his own father-in-law, Servius Tullius, to be cruelly murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom; went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea. During which siege, the principal men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper, every one commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom, Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending, by their secret and sudden arrival, to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only Collatinus finds his wife (though it were late in the night) spinning amongst her maids: the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time Sextus Tarquinius being inflamed with Lucrece's beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself, and was (according to his estate) royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at Collatium. The same night, he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away. Lucrece in this lamentable plight, hastily dispatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for Collatine. They came, the one accompanied with Janius Brutus, the other with Publius Valerius; and finding Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed herself. Which done, with one consent they all vowed to root out the whole hated family of the Tarquins; and bearing the dead body to Rome, Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king: wherewith the people were so moved, that with one consent and a general acclamation the Tarquins were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls.

THE
RAPE OF LUCRECE.

FROM the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Collatium bears the lightless fire
Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire,
And girdle with embracing flames the waist
Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

Haply that name of *chaste* unhapp'ly set
This bateless edge on his keen appetite ;
When Collatine unwisely did not let
To praise the clear unmatched red and white
Which triumph'd in that sky of his delight,
Where mortal stars, as bright as heaven's beauties,
With pure aspects did him peculiar duties.

For he the night before, in Tarquin's tent,
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state ;
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
In the possession of his beauteous mate ;
Reckoning his fortune at such high-proud rate,
That kings might be espoused to more fame,
But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

O happiness enjoy'd but of a few !
And, if possess'd, as soon decayed and done
As is the morning's silver-melting dew
Against the golden splendour of the sun !
An expir'd date, cancel'd ere well begun :
Honour and beauty in the owner's arms,
Are weakly fortress'd from a world of harms.

Beauty itself doth of itself persuade
 The eyes of men without an orator ;
 What needeth then apology be made
 To set forth that which is so singular?
 Or why is Collatine the publisher
 Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
 From thievish ears, because it is his own?

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sovereignty
 Suggested this proud issue of a king ;
 For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be :
 Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,
 Braving compare, disdainfully did sting [vaunt
 His high-pitch'd thoughts, that meaner men should
 The golden hap which their superiors want.

But some untimely thought did instigate
 His all-too-timeless speed, if none of those :
 His honour, his affairs, his friends, his state,
 Neglected all, with swift intent he goes
 To quench the coal which in his liver glows.
 O rash-false heat, wrapt in repentant cold,
 Thy hasty spring still blasts, and ne'er grows old!

When at Collatium this false lord arrived,
 Well was he welcom'd by the Roman dame,
 Within whose face beauty and virtue strived
 Which of them both should underprop her fame :
 When virtue bragg'd, beauty would blush for shame ;
 When beauty boasted blushes, in despite
 Virtue would stain that o'er with silver white.

But beauty, in that white intituled,
 From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field ;
 Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
 Which virtue gave the golden age, to gild
 Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield ;
 Teaching them thus to use it in the fight,—
 When shame assail'd, the red should fence the white.

This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,
 Argued by beauty's red, and virtue's white.
 Of either's colour was the other queen,
 Proving from world's minority their right :
 Yet their ambition makes them still to fight ;
 The sovereignty of either being so great,
 That oft they interchange each other's seat.

This silent war of lilies and of roses
Which Tarquin view'd in her fair face's field,
In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses;
Where, lest between them both it should be kill'd,
The coward captive vanquished doth yield
To those two armies that would let him go,
Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue
(The niggard prodigal that prais'd her so)
In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,
Which far exceeds his barren skill to show:
Therefore that praise which Collatine doth owe,
Enchanted Tarquin answers with surmise,
In silent wonder of still-gazing eyes.

This earthly saint, adored by this devil,
Little suspecteth the false worshipper;
For thoughts unstain'd do seldom dream on evil;
Birds never lim'd no secret bushes fear:
So guiltless she securely gives good cheer
And reverend welcome to her princely guest,
Whose inward ill no outward harm express'd.

For that he colour'd with his high estate,
Hiding base sin in plaits of majesty;
That nothing in him seem'd inordinate,
Save sometime too much wonder of his eye,
Which, having all, all could not satisfy;
But, poorly rich, so wanteth in his store,
That cloy'd with much, he pineth still for more.

But she that never cop'd with stranger eyes,
Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,
Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies
Writ in the glassy margents of such books;
She touch'd no unknown baits, nor fear'd no hooks;
Nor could she moralize his wanton sight,
More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

He stories to her ears her husband's fame,
Won in the fields of fruitful Italy;
And decks with praises Collatine's high name,
Made glorious by his manly chivalry,
With bruised arms and wreaths of victory:
Her joy with heav'd-up hand she doth express,
And, wordless, so greets heaven for his success.

Far from the purpose of his coming thither,
He makes excuses for his being there.
No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather
Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear ;
Till sable Night, mother of Dread and Fear,
Upon the world dim darkness doth display,
And in her vaulty prison stows the day.

For then is Tarquin brought unto his bed,
Intending weariness with heavy spright ;
For, after supper, long he questioned
With modest Lucrece, and wore out the night :
Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight ;
And every one to rest himself betakes,
Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds that wakes.

As one of which doth Tarquin lie revolving
The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining ;
Yet ever to obtain his will resolving,
Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstaining ;
Despair to gain, doth traffic oft for gaining ;
And when great treasure is the meed proposed,
Though death be adjunct, there's no death supposed.

Those that much covet, are with gain so fond,
That what they have not (that which they possess)
They scatter and unlose it from their bond,
And so, by hoping more, they have but less ;
Or gaining more, the profit of excess
Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
That they prove bankrupt in this poor-rich gain.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life
With honour, wealth, and ease, in waining age ;
And in this aim there is such thwarting strife,
That one for all, or all for one we gage ;
As life for honour, in fell battles' rage ;
Honour for wealth ; and oft that wealth doth cost
The death of all, and all together lost.

So that in vent'ring ill, we leave to be
The things we are, for that which we expect ;
And this ambitious foul infirmity,
In having much, torments us with defect
Of that we have : so then we do neglect
The thing we have, and, all for want of wit,
Make something nothing, by augmenting it.

Such hazard now must doting Tarquin make,
Pawning his honour to obtain his lust;
And for himself, himself he must forsake :
Then where is truth, if there be no self-trust?
When shall he think to find a stranger just,
When he himself himself confounds, betrays
To slanderous tongues, and wretched hateful days?

Now stole upon the time the dead of night,
When heavy sleep had clos'd up mortal eyes ;
No comfortable star did lend his light.
No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries :
Now serves the season that they may surprise
The silly lambs ; pure thoughts are dead and still,
While lust and murder wake to stain and kill.

And now this lustful lord leap'd from his bed,
Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm ;
Is madly toss'd between desire and dread ;
The one sweetly flatters, the other feareth harm ;
But honest Fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul charm,
Doth too too oft betake him to retire,
Beaten away by brain-sick rude Desire.

His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,
That from the cold stone sparks of fire do fly,
Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,
Which must be lode-star to his lustful eye ;
And to the flame thus speaks advisedly :
As from this cold flint I enfore'd this fire,
So Lucrece must I force to my desire.

Here pale with fear he doth premeditate
The dangers of his loathsome enterprize,
And in his inward mind he doth debate
What following sorrow may on this arise :
Then looking scornfully, he doth despise
His naked armour of still-slaughter'd lust,
And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust.

Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not
To darken her whose light excelleth thine !
And die unhallow'd thoughts, before you blot
With your uncleanness that which is divine !
Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine :
Let fair humanity abhor the deed
That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed.

O shame to knighthood and to shining arms!
O foul dishonour to my household's grave!
O impious act, including all foul harms!
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave!
True valour still a true respect should have;
Then my digression is so vile, so base,
That it will live engraven in my face.

Yea, though I die, the scandal will survive,
And be an eye-sore in my golden coat;
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive,
To cipher me, how fondly I did dote;
That my posterity, sham'd with the note,
Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin
To wish that I their father had not been.

What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy:
Who buys a minute's mirth, to wail a week?
Or sells eternity, to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
Would with the scepter straight be stricken down?

If Collatinus dream of my intent,
Will he not wake, and in a desperate rage
Post hither, this vile purpose to prevent?
This siege that hath engirt his marriage,
This blur to youth, this sorrow to the sage,
This dying virtue, this surviving shame
Whose crime will bear an ever-during blame?

O what excuse can my invention make,
When thou shalt charge me with so black a deed?
Will not my tongue be mute, my frail joints shake?
Mine eyes forego their light, my false heart bleed?
The guilt being great, the fear doth still exceed;
And extreme fear can neither fight nor fly,
But coward-like with trembling terror die.

Had Collatinus kill'd my son or sire,
Or lain in ambush to betray my life,
Or were he not my dear friend, this desire
Might have excuse to work upon his wife;
As in revenge or quittal of such strife:
But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,
The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.

Shameful it is;—ay, if the fact be known:
Hateful it is;—there is no hate in loving:
 I'll beg her love;—*but she is not her own*:
 The worst is but denial, and reproving:
 My will is strong, past reason's weak removing.
 Who fears a sentence or an old man's saw,
 Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe.

Thus graceless, holds he disputation
 'Tween frozen conscience, and hot-burning will,
 And with good thoughts makes dispensation,
 Urging the worser sense for vantage still;
 Which in a moment doth confound and kill
 All pure effects, and doth so far proceed,
 That what is vile shows like a virtuous deed.

Quoth he, she took me kindly by the hand,
 And gaz'd for tidings in my eager eyes,
 Fearing some hard news from the warlike band
 Where her beloved Collatinus lies.
 O how her fear did make her colour rise!
 First red as roses that on lawn we lay,
 Then white as lawn, the roses took away.

And how her hand, in my hand being lock'd,
 Fore'd it to tremble with her loyal fear!
 Which struck her sad, and then it faster rock'd,
 Until her husband's welfare she did hear;
 Whereat she smiled with so sweet a cheer,
 That had Narcissus seen her as she stood,
 Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood.

Why hunt I then for colour or excuses?
 All orators are dumb, when beauty pleadeth;
 Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses;
 Love thrives not in the heart that shadows dreadeth:
 Affection is my captain, and he leadeth;
 And when his gaudy banner is display'd,
 The coward fights, and will not be dismay'd.

Then childish fear avaunt! debating die!
 Respect and reason, wait on wrinkled age!
 My heart shall never countermand mine eye:
 Sad pause and deep regard bescem the sage;
 My part is youth, and beats these from the stage:
 Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize;
 Then who fears sinking where such treasure lies?

As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear
 Is almost chok'd by unresisted lust.
 Away he steals with open listening ear,
 Full of foul hope, and full of fond mistrust ;
 Both which, as servitors to the unjust,
 So cross him with their opposite persuasion,
 That now he vows a league, and now invasion.

Within his thought her heavenly image sits,
 And in the self same seat sits Collatine :
 That eye which looks on her, confounds his wits,
 That eye which him beholds, as more divine,
 Unto a view so false will not incline ;
 But with a pure appeal seeks to the heart,
 Which once corrupted, takes the worser part ;

And therein heartens up his servile powers,
 Who, flatter'd by their leader's jocund show,
 Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours ;
 And as their captain, so their pride doth grow,
 Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.
 By reprobate desire thus madly led,
 The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,
 Each one by him enforc'd, retires his ward ;
 But as they open, they all rate his ill,
 Which drives the creeping thief to some regard :
 The threshold grates the door to have him heard ;
 Night-wand'ring weesels shriek to see him there ;
 They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,
 Through little vents and crannies of the place
 The wind wars with his torch, to make him stay,
 And blows the smoke of it into his face,
 Extinguishing his conduct in this case ;
 But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch,
 Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch :

And being lighted, by the light he spies
 Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks ;
 He takes it from the rushes where it lies ;
 And griping it, the neeld his finger pricks :
 As who would say, this glove to wanton tricks
 Is not inur'd ; return again in haste ;
 Thou seest our mistress' ornaments are chaste.

But all these poor forbiddings could not stay him;
He in the worst sense construes their denial:
The doors, the wind, the glove that did delay him,
He takes for accidental things of trial;
Or as those bars which stop the hourly dial,
Who with a ling'ring stay his course doth let,
Till every minute pays the hour his debt.

So, so, quoth he, these lets attend the time,
Like little frosts that sometime threat the spring,
To add a more rejoicing to the prime,
And give the sneaped birds more cause to sing.
Pain pays the income of each precious thing; [sands,
Huge rocks, high winds, strong pirates, shelves and
The merchant fears, ere rich at home he lands.

Now is he come unto the chamber door
That shuts him from the heaven of his thought,
Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,
Hath barr'd him from the blessed thing he sought.
So from himself impiety hath wrought,
That for his prey to pray he doth begin,
As if the heaven should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,
Having solicited the eternal power,
That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,
And they would stand auspicious to the hour,
Even there he starts:—quoth he, I must deflower;
The powers to whom I pray, abhor this fact,
How can they then assist me in the act?

Then Love and Fortune be my gods, my guide!
My will is back'd with resolution:
Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried,
The blackest sin is clear'd with absolution;
Against love's fire, fear's frost hath dissolution.
The eye of heaven is out, and misty night
Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.

This said, his guilty hand pluck'd up the latch,
And with his knee the door he opens wide:
The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch;
Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.
Who sees the lurking serpent, steps aside;
But she, sound sleeping, fearing no such thing,
Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,
And gazeth on her yet unstained bed.
The curtains being close, about he walks,
Rolling his greedy eye-balls in his head :
By their high treason is his heart misled ;
Which gives the watch-word to his hand full soon,
To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look as the fair, and fiery-pointed sun,
Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight ;
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun
To wink, being blinded with a greater light :
Whether it is, that she reflects so bright,
That dazzleth them, or else some shame supposed ;
But blind they are, and keep themselves enclosed.

O, had they in that darksome prison died,
Then had they seen the period of their ill !
Then Collatine again by Lucrece' side,
In his clear bed might have reposed still :
But they must ope, this blessed league to kill ;
And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight
Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
Cozening the pillow of a lawful kiss ;
Who therefore angry, seems to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his bliss ;
Between whose hills her head intombed is :
Where, like a virtuous monument, she lies,
To be admir'd of lewd unhallow'd eyes.

Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet ; whose perfect white
Show'd like an April daisy on the grass,
With pearly sweat, resembling dew of night.
Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheath'd their light,
And, canopied in darkness, sweetly lay,
Till they might open to adorn the day.

Her hair, like golden threads, play'd with her breath ;
O modest wantons ! wanton modesty !
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim look in life's mortality.
Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,
As if between them twain there were no strife,
But that life liv'd in death, and death in life.

Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,
Save of their lord, no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honoured.
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred ;
Who, like a foul usurper, went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see, but mightily he noted ?
What did he note, but strongly he desired ?
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
And in his will his wilful eye he tired.
With more than admiration he admired
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,
So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
His rage of lust by gazing qualified ;
Slack'd, not suppress'd ; for standing by her side,
His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins.

And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting,
Obdurate vassals, fell exploits effecting,
In bloody death and ravishment delighting,
Nor children's tears, nor mother's groans respecting,
Swell in their pride, the onset still expecting :
Anon his beating heart, alarum striking,
Gives the hot charge, and bids them do their liking.

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye,
His eye commends the leading to his hand ;
His hand, as proud of such a dignity,
Smoking with pride, march'd on to make his stand
On her bare breast, the heart of all her land ;
Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did scale
Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

They mustering to the quiet cabinet
Where their dear governess and lady lies,
Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,
And fright her with confusion of their cries :
She much amaz'd, breaks ope her lock'd-up eyes,
Who, peeping forth this tumult to behold,
Are by his flaming torch dimm'd and controll'd.

Imagine her as one in dead of night
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
Whose grim aspect sets every joint a shaking ;
What terror 'tis ! but she, in worsè taking,
From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view,
The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,
Like to a new-kill'd bird she trembling lies ;
She dares not look ; yet, winking, there appears
Quick-shifting anticks, ugly in her eyes :
Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries ;
Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,
In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights.

His hand that yet remains upon her breast
(Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall !)
May feel her heart (poor citizen !) distress'd,
Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,
Beating her bulk, that his hand shakes withal.
This moves in him more rage, and lesser pity,
To make the breach, and enter this sweet city.

First, like a trumpet, doth his tongue begin
To sound a parley to his heartless foe,
Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,
The reason of this rash alarm to know,
Which he by dumb demeanour seeks to show ;
But she with vehement prayers urgeth still,
Under what colour he commits this ill.

Thus he replies : The colour in thy face
(That even for anger makes the lily pale,
And the red rose blush at her own disgrace,)
Shall plead for me, and tell my loving tale :
Under that colour am I come to scale
Thy never-conquer'd fort ; the fault is thine,
For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

Thus I forestall thee, if thou mean to chide :
Thy beauty hath ensnar'd thee to this night,
Where thou with patience must my will abide,
My will that marks thee for my earth's delight,
Which I to conquer sought with all my might ;
But as reproof and reason beat it dead,
By thy bright beauty was it newly bred.

I see what crosses my attempt will bring ;
I know what thorns the growing rose defends ;
I think the honey guarded with a sting ;
All this, beforehand, counsel comprehends :
But will is deaf, and hears no heedful friends ;
 Only he hath an eye to gaze on beauty,
 And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law or duty.

I have debated, even in my soul,
What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall breed ;
But nothing can affection's course control,
Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.
I know repentant tears ensue the deed,
 Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity ;
 Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy.

This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,
Which like a falcon towering in the skies,
Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade,
Whose crooked beak threatens if he mount he dies :
So under the insulting falchion lies
 Harmless Lucretia, marking what he tells,
 With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcons' bells.

Lucrece, quoth he, this night I must enjoy thee :
If thou deny, then force must work my way,
For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee ;
That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay,
To kill thine honour with thy life's decay ;
 And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
 Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

So thy surviving husband shall remain
The scornful mark of every open eye :
Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
Thy issue blurr'd with nameless bastardy :
And thou, the author of their obloquy,
 Shall have thy trespass cited up in rhymes,
 And sung by children in succeeding times.

But if thou yield, I rest thy secret friend :
The fault unknown is as a thought enacted ;
A little harm done to a great good end,
For lawful policy remains enacted.
The poisonous simple sometimes is compacted
 In a pure compound ; being so applied,
 His venom in effect is purified.

Then for thy husband's and thy children's sake,
Tender my suit: bequeath not to their lot
The shame that from them no device can take,
The blemish that will never be forgot;
Worse than a slavish wipe, or birth-hour's blot:
For marks descried in men's nativity
Are nature's faults, not their own infamy.

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye,
He rouseth up himself, and makes a pause,
While she, the picture of pure piety,
Like a white hind under the grype's sharp claws,
Pleads in a wilderness, where are no laws,
To the rough beast that knows no gentle right,
Nor ought obeys but his foul appetite.

Look, when a black-fac'd cloud the world doth threat,
In his dim mist the aspiring mountains hiding,
From earth's dark womb some gentle gust doth get,
Which blows these pitchy vapours from their biding,
Hindering their present fall by this dividing;
So his unhallow'd haste her words delays,
And moody Pluto winks while Orpheus plays.

Yet, foul night-waking cat, he doth but dally,
While in his hold-fast foot the weak mouse panteth;
Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture folly,
A swallowing gulf that even in plenty wanteth:
His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth
No penetrable entrance to her plainings:
Tears harden lust, though marble wear with raining.

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fixed
In the remorseless wrinkles of his face;
Her modest eloquence with sighs is mixed,
Which to her oratory adds more grace.
She puts the period often from his place,
And 'midst the sentence so her accent breaks,
That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks.

She conjures him by high almighty Jove,
By knighthood, gentry, and sweet friendship's oath,
By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
By holy human law, and common troth,
By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,
That to his borrow'd bed he make retire,
And stoop to honour, not to foul desire.

Quoth she, reward not hospitality
 With such black payment as thou hast pretended;
 Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee;
 Mar not the thing that cannot be amended;
 End thy ill aim, before thy shoot be ended:
 He is no wood-man that doth bend his bow
 To strike a poor unseasonable doe.

My husband is thy friend, for his sake spare me;
 Thyself art mighty, for thine own sake leave me;
 Myself a weakling, do not then ensnare me.
 Thou look'st not like deceit; do not deceive me:
 My sighs, like whirlwinds, labour hence to leave thee.
 If ever man were mov'd with woman's moans,
 Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans;

All which together, like a troubled ocean,
 Beat at thy rocky and wreck-threatening heart,
 To soften it with their continual motion;
 For stones dissolv'd to water do convert.
 O, if no harder than a stone thou art,
 Melt at my tears and be compassionate!
 Soft pity enters at an iron gate.

In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee:
 Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?
 To all the host of heaven I complain thee,
 Thou wrong'st his honour, wound'st his princely name.
 Thou art not what thou seem'st, and if the same,
 Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king;
 For kings like gods should govern every thing.

How will thy shame be seeded in thine age,
 When thus thy vices bud before thy spring?
 If in thy hope thou dar'st do such outrage,
 What dar'st thou not when once thou art a king?
 O be remember'd, no outrageous thing
 From vassal actors can be wip'd away;
 Then kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

This deed will make thee only lov'd for fear,
 But happy monarchs still are fear'd for love:
 With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,
 When they in thee the like offences prove:
 If but for fear of this, thy will remove;
 For princes are the glass, the school, the book,
 Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.

And wilt thou be the school where Lust shall learn?
Must he in thee read lectures of such shame?
Wilt thou be glass, wherein it shall discern
Authority for sin, warrant for blame,
To privilege dishonour in thy name?
Thou back'st reproach against long-living laud,
And mak'st fair reputation but a bawd.

Hast thou command? by him that gave it thee,
From a pure heart command thy rebel will:
Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,
For it was lent thee all that brood to kill.
Thy princely office how canst thou fulfill,
When, pattern'd by thy fault, foul Sin may say,
He learn'd to sin, and thou didst teach the way?

Think but how vile a spectacle it were
To view thy present trespass in another.
Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear;
Their own transgressions partially they smother:
This guilt would seem death-worthy in thy brother.
O how are they wrapp'd in with infamies,
That from their own misdeeds askaunce their eyes!

To thee, to thee, my heav'd-up hands appeal,
Not to seducing lust, thy rash reliev;
I sue for exil'd majesty's repeal;
Let him return, and flattering thoughts retire:
His true respect will 'prison false desire,
And wipe the dim mist from thy doting eyne,
That thou shalt see thy state, and pity mine.

Have done, quoth he, my uncontrolled tide
'Turns not, but swells the higher by this let.
Small lights are soon blown out, huge fires abide,
And with the wind in greater fury fret:
The petty streams that pay a daily debt
To their salt sovereign, with their fresh falls' haste,
Add to his flow, but alter not his taste.

Thou art, quoth she, a sea, a sovereign king;
And lo, there falls into thy boundless flood
Black lust, dishonour, shame, misgoverning,
Who seek to stain the ocean of thy blood.
If all these petty ills shall change thy good,
'Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hersed,
And not the puddle in thy sea dispersed.

So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave ;
 Thou nobly base, they basely dignified ;
 Thou their fair life, and they thy fouler grave ;
 Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride ;
 The lesser thing should not the greater hide ;
 The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,
 But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root.

So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state—
 No more, quoth he, by heaven, I will not hear thee :
 Yield to my love ; if not, enforced hate,
 Instead of love's coy touch, shall rudely tear thee ;
 That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee
 Unto the base bed of some rascal groom,
 To be thy partner in this shameful doom.

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
 For light and lust are deadly enemies :
 Shame folded up in blind concealing night,
 When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
 The wolf hath seiz'd his prey, the poor lamb cries,
 Till with her own white fleece her voice controll'd
 Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold :

For with the nightly linen that she wears,
 He pens her piteous clamours in her head ;
 Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears
 That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
 O, that prone lust should stain so pure a bed !
 The spots whereof could weeping purify,
 Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,
 And he hath won what he would lose again.
 This forced league doth force a further strife,
 This momentary joy breeds months of pain,
 This hot desire converts to cold disdain :
 Pure chastity is rifled of her store,
 And lust, the thief, far poorer than before.

Look as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,
 Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,
 Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk
 The prey wherein by nature they delight ;
 So surfeit-taking Tarquin fares this night :
 His taste delicious, in digestion souring,
 Devours his will that liv'd by foul devouring.

O deeper sin than bottomless conceit
Can comprehend in still imagination!
Drunken desire must vomit his receipt,
Ere he can see his own abomination.
While lust is in his pride, no exclamation
Can curb his heat, or rein his rash desire,
Till, like a jade, self-will himself doth tire.

And then with lank and lean discolour'd cheek,
With heavy eye, knit brow, and strengthless pace,
Feeble desire, all recreant, poor, and meek,
Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case:
The flesh being proud, desire doth fight with grace,
For there it revels; and when that decays,
The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this faultful lord of Rome,
Who this accomplishment so hotly chased;
For now against himself he sounds this doom,
That through the length of times he stands disgraced:
Besides, his soul's fair temple is defaced;
To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection
Have batter'd down her consecrated wall,
And by their mortal fault brought in subjection
Her immortality, and made her thrall
To living death, and pain perpetual:
Which in her prescience she controlled still,
But her fore-sight could not fore-stall their will.

Even in his thought, through the dark night he stealeth,
A captive victor, that hath lost in gain;
Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
The scar that will, despite of cure, remain,
Leaving his spoil perplex'd in greater pain.
She bears the load of lust he left behind,
And he the burthen of a guilty mind.

He, like a thievish dog, creeps sadly thence,
She like a wearied lamb lies panting there;
He scowls, and hates himself for his offence,
She desperate, with her nails her flesh doth tear;
He faintly flies, sweating with guilty fear;
She stays exclaiming on the direful night,
He runs, and chides his vanish'd, loath'd delight.

He thence departs, a heavy convertite,
 She there remains a hopeless cast-away:
 He in his speed looks for the morning light,
 She prays she never may behold the day:
 For day, quoth she, night-scapes doth open lay;
 And my true eyes have never practis'd how
 To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

They think not but that every eye can see
 The same disgrace which they themselves behold;
 And therefore would they still in darkness be,
 To have their unseen sin remain untold;
 For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,
 And grave, like water that doth eat in steel,
 Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel.

Here she exclaims against repose and rest,
 And bids her eyes hereafter still be blind.
 She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,
 And bids it leap from thence, where it may find
 Some purer chest, to close so pure a mind.
 Frantic with grief thus breathes she forth her spite
 Against the unseen secrecy of night.

O comfort-killing night, image of hell!
 Dim register and notary of shame!
 Black stage for tragedies and murders fell!
 Vast sin-concealing chaos! nurse of blame!
 Blind muffled bawd! dark harbour for defame!
 Grim cave of death, whispering conspirator
 With close-tongued treason and the ravisher!

O hateful, vaporous and foggy night,
 Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime,
 Muster thy mists to meet the eastern light,
 Make war against proportion'd course of time!
 Or if thou wilt permit the sun to climb
 His wonted height, yet ere he go to bed,
 Knit poisonous clouds about his golden head.

With rotten damps ravish the morning air;
 Let their exhal'd unwholesome breaths make sick
 The life of purity, the supreme fair,
 Ere he arrive his weary noon-tide prick;
 And let thy misty vapours march so thick,
 That in their smoky ranks his smother'd light
 May set at noon, and make perpetual night.

Were Tarquin night, (as he is but night's child,)
 The silver-shining queen he would distain;
 Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defil'd,
 Through night's black bosom should not peep again;
 So should I have copartners in my pain:
 And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
 As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.

Where now I have no one to blush with me,
 To cross their arms, and hang their heads with mine,
 To mask their brows, and hide their infamy;
 But I alone, alone must sit and pine,
 Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine,
 Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with groans,
 Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

O night, thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,
 Let not the jealous day behold that face
 Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak
 Immodestly lies martyr'd with disgrace!
 Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,
 That all the faults which in thy reign are made
 May likewise be sepulchr'd in thy shade!

Make me not object to the tale-tell day!
 The night will show, charáctér'd in my brow,
 The story of sweet chastity's decay,
 The impious breach of holy wedlock's vow:
 Yea, the illiterate that know not how
 To 'cipher what is writ in learned books,
 Will quote my loathsome trespass in my looks.

The nurse, to still her child, will tell my story,
 And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name;
 The orator, to deck his oratory,
 Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame:
 Feast-finding minstrels, tuning my defame,
 Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
 How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.

Let my good name, that senseless reputation,
 For Collatine's dear love be kept unspotted:
 If that be made a theme for disputation,
 The branches of another root are rotted,
 And undeserv'd reproach to him allotted,
 That is as clear from this attain't of mine,
 As I, ere this, was pure to Collatine.

O unseem shame! invisible disgrace!
O unfelt sore! crest-wounding, private scar!
Reproach is stamp'd in Collatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar,
How he in peace is wounded, not in war.

Alas, how many bear such shameful blows,
Which not themselves, but he that gives them, knows!

If, Collatine, thine honour lay in me,
From me by strong assault it is bereft.
My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,
Have no perfection of my summer left,
But robb'd and ransack'd by injurious theft:
In thy weak hive a wandering wasp hath crept,
And suck'd the honey which thy chaste bee kept.

Yet am I guiltless of thy honour's wreck;
Yet for thy honour did I entertain him;
Coming from thee, I could not put him back,
For it had been dishonour to disdain him:
Besides of weariness he did complain him,
And talk'd of virtue:—O unlook'd for evil,
When virtue is prophan'd in such a devil!

Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests?
Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?
Or kings be breakers of their own behests?
But no perfection is so absolute,
That some impurity doth not pollute.

The aged man that coffers up his gold,
Is plagu'd with cramps, and gouts, and painful fits,
And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold,
But like still-pining Tantalus he sits,
And useless barns the harvest of his wits;
Having no other pleasure of his gain,
But torment that it cannot cure his pain.

So then he hath it when he cannot use it,
And leaves it to be master'd by his young;
Who in their pride do presently abuse it:
Their father was too weak, and they too strong,
To hold their cursed-blessed fortune long.
The sweets we wish for turn to loathed sour,
Even in the moment that we call them ours.

Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring ;
Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers ;
The adder hisses where the sweet bird sings ;
What virtue breeds, iniquity devours :
We have no good that we can say is ours,
 But ill-annexed opportunity
 Or kills his life, or else his quality.

O Opportunity! thy guilt is great:
'Tis thou that execut'st the traitor's treason ;
Thou set'st the wolf where he the lamb may get ;
Whoever plots the sin thou point'st the season ;
'Tis thou that spurn'st at right, at law, at reason ;
 And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,
 Sits Sin, to seize the souls that wander by him.

Thou mak'st the vestal violate her oath ;
Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thaw'd ;
Thou smother'st honesty, thou murder'st troth ;
Thou foul abettor! thou notorious bawd !
Thou plantest scandal, and displacest laud :
 Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,
 Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief!

Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,
Thy private feasting to a public fast ;
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name ;
Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste :
Thy violent vanities can never last.
 How comes it then, vile opportunity,
 Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee?

When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's friend,
And bring him where his suit may be obtained ?
When wilt thou sort an hour great strifes to end ?
Or free that soul which wretchedness hath chained ?
Give physic to the sick, ease to the pained ?
 The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for thee ;
 But they ne'er meet with opportunity.

The patient dies while the physician sleeps ;
The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds ;
Justice is feasting while the widow weeps ;
Advice is sporting while infection breeds ;
Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds ?
 Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's rages,
 Thy heinous hours wait on them as their pages.

When Truth and Virtue have to do with thee,
A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid ;
They buy thy help : but Sin ne'er gives a fee,
He gratis comes ; and thou art well appay'd
As well to hear as grant what he hath said.

My Collatine would else have come to me
When Tarquin did, but he was stay'd by thee.

Guilty thou art of murder and of theft ;
Guilty of perjury and subornation ;
Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift :
Guilty of incest, that abomination :
An accessory by thine inclination
To all sins past, and all that are to come,
From the creation to the general doom.

Misshapen Time, copesmate of ugly night,
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care ;
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's snare ;
Thou nursest all, and murderest all that are.

O hear me then, injurious, shifting Time !
Be guilty of my death, since of my crime.

Why hath thy servant, Opportunity,
Betray'd the hours thou gav'st me to repose ?
Cancell'd my fortunes, and enchain'd me
To endless date of never-ending woes ?
Time's office is to fine the hate of foes ;
To eat up error by opinion bred,
Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wake the morn, and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right ;
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
And smear with dust their glittering golden towers :

To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books, and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oak's sap, and cherish springs ;
To spoil antiquities of hammer'd steel,
And turn the giddy round of fortune's wheel :

To show the beldame daughters of her daughter,
 To make the child a man, the man a child,
 To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,
 To tame the unicorn and lion wild ;
 To mock the subtle, in themselves beguil'd ;
 To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops,
 And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

Why work'st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,
 Unless thou could'st return to make amends ?
 One poor retiring minute in an age
 Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,
 Lending him wit, that to bad debtors lends :
 O, this dread night, would'st thou one hour come back,
 I could prevent this storm, and shun this wrack !

'Thou ceaseless lackey to eternity,
 With some mischance cross Tarquin in his flight :
 Devise extremes beyond extremity,
 To make him curse this cursed crimeful night :
 Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright ;
 And the dire thought of his committed evil,
 Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,
 Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans ;
 Let there bechance him pitiful mischances,
 To make him moan, but pity not his moans :
 Stone him with harden'd hearts, harder than stones ;
 And let mild women to him lose their mildness,
 Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
 Let him have time against himself to rave,
 Let him have time of time's help to despair ;
 Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
 Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave ;
 And time to see one that by alms doth live,
 Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
 And merry fools to mock at him resort :
 Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
 In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
 His time of folly and his time of sport :
 And ever let his unrecalling crime
 Have time to wait the abusing of his time.

O Time, thou tutor both to good and bad,
Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill!
At his own shadow let the thief run mad,
Himself himself seek every hour to kill!
Such wretched hands such wretched blood should spill :
For who so base would such an office have
As slanderous death's-man to so base a slave?

The baser is he, coming from a king,
To shame his hope with deeds degenerate.
The mightier man, the mightier is the thing
That makes him honour'd, or begets him hate ;
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
The moon being clouded presently is miss'd,
But little stars may hide them when they list.

The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in mire,
And unpereeiv'd fly with the filth away ;
But if the like the snow-white swan desire,
The stain upon his silver down will stay.
Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious day.
Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,
But eagles gaz'd upon with every eye.

Out idle words, servants to shallow fools!
Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators!
Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools,
Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters;
To trembling clients be you mediators :
For me, I force not argument a straw,
Since that my case is past the help of law.

In vain I rail at Opportunity,
At Time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful night ;
In vain I cavil with my infamy,
In vain I spurn at my confirm'd despite :
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.
The remedy indeed to do me good,
Is to let forth my foul, defiled blood.

Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree ?
Honour thyself to rid me of this shame ;
For if I die, my honour lives in thee,
But if I live, thou liv'st in my defame :
Since thou could'st not defend thy loyal dame,
And wast afraid to scratch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.

'This said, from her be-tumbled couch she starteth,
To find some desperate instrument of death.
But this no-slaughter-house no tool imparteth,
To make more vent for passage of her breath,
Which thronging through her lips so vanisheth
As smoke from *Ætna*, that in air consumes,
Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

In vain, quoth she, I live, and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life.
I fear'd by *Tarquin's* falchion to be slain,
Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife :
But when I fear'd, I was a loyal wife ;
So am I now :—O no, that cannot be ;
Of that true type hath *Tarquin* rifled me.

O ! that is gone, for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die.
To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery ;
A dying life to living infamy ;
Poor helpless help, the treasure stolen away,
To burn the guiltless casket where it lay !

Well, well, dear *Collatine*, thou shalt not know
The stained taste of violated troth ;
I will not wrong thy true affection so,
To flatter thee with an infringed oath ;
This bastard graff shall never come to growth :
He shall not boast, who did thy stock pollute,
That thou art doting father of his fruit.

Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
Nor laugh with his companions at thy state ;
But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought
Basely with gold, but stolen from forth thy gate.
For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
And with my trespass never will dispense,
Till life to death acquit my forc'd offence.

I will not poison thee with my attaint,
Nor fold my fault in cleanly-coin'd excuses ;
My sable ground of sin I will not paint,
To hide the truth of this false night's abuses :
My tongue shall utter all ; mine eyes like sluices,
As from a mountain-spring that feeds a dale,
Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure tale.

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tun'd warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow-sad gait descended
To ugly hell ; when lo, the blushing morrow
Lends light to all fair eyes that light will borrow :
But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
And therefore still in night would cloister'd be.

Revealing day through every cranny spies,
And seems to point her out where she sits weeping ;
To whom she sobbing speaks : O eye of eyes,
Why pry'st thou through my window ? leave thy peeping ;
Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are sleeping :
Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,
For day hath nought to do what's done by night.

Thus cavils she with every thing she sees :
True grief is fond and testy as a child,
Who wayward once, his mood with nought agrees.
Old woes, not infant sorrows, bear them mild ;
Continuance tames the one ; the other wild,
Like an unpractis'd swimmer plunging still,
With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care,
Holds disputation with each thing she views,
And to herself all sorrow doth compare ;
No object but her passion's strength renews ;
And as one shifts, another straight ensues :
Sometime her grief is dumb, and hath no words ;
Sometime 'tis mad, and too much talk affords.

The little birds that tune their morning's joy,
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody.
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy ;
Sad souls are slain in merry company ;
Grief best is pleas'd with grief's society :
True sorrow then is feelingly suffic'd,
When with like semblance it is sympathiz'd.

'Tis double death to drown in ken of shore ;
He ten times pines, that pines beholding food ;
To see the salve doth make the wound ache more ;
Great grief grieves most at that would do it good ;
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood,
Who being stopp'd, the bounding banks o'er-flows :
Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows.

You mocking birds, quoth she, your tunes entomb
 Within your hollow-swelling feather'd breasts
 And in my hearing be you mute and dumb!
 (My restless discord loves no stops nor rests;
 A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests:)
 Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;
 Distress likes dumps when time is kept with tears.

Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment,
 Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair.
 As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
 So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
 And with deep groans the diapason bear:
 For burthen-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,
 While thou on Tereus descant'st, better skill.

And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,
 To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
 To imitate thee well, against my heart
 Will fix a sharp knife, to affright mine eye;
 Who, if it wink, shall thereon fall and die.
 These means, as frets upon an instrument,
 Shall tune our heart-strings to true languishment.

And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,
 As shaming any eye should thee behold,
 Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,
 That knows nor parching heat nor freezing cold,
 Will we find out; and there we will unfold
 To creatures stern sad tunes, to change their kinds:
 Since men prove beasts, let beasts bear gentle minds.

As the poor frightened deer, that stands at gaze,
 Wildly determining which way to fly,
 Or one encompass'd with a winding maze,
 That cannot tread the way out readily;
 So with herself is she in mutiny,
 To live or die which of the twain were better,
 When life is sham'd, and Death Reproach's debtor.

To kill myself, quoth she, alack! what were it,
 But with my body my poor soul's pollution?
 They that lose half, with greater patience bear it,
 Than they whose whole is swallow'd in confusion.
 That mother tries a merciless conclusion,
 Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes one,
 Will slay the other, and be nurse to none.

My body or my soul, which was the dearer ?
When the one pure, the other made divine.
Whose love of either to myself was nearer ?
When both were kept for heaven and Collatine.
Ah me ! the bark peel'd from the lofty pine,
His leaves will wither, and his sap decay ;
So must my soul, her bark being peel'd away.

Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy ;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy :
Then let it not be call'd impiety,
If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole,
Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

Yet die I will not, till my Collatine
Have heard the cause of my untimely death ;
That he may vow, in that sad hour of mine,
Revenge on him that made me stop my breath.
My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath,
Which by him tainted, shall for him be spent,
And as his due, writ in my testament.

My honour I'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonoured.
'Tis honour to deprive dishonour'd life ;
The one will live, the other being dead :
So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred ;
For in my death I murder shameful scorn :
My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.

Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,
What legacy shall I bequeath to thee ?
My resolution, Love, shall be thy boast,
By whose example thou reveng'd may'st be.
How Tarquin must be us'd, read it in me :
Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,
And, for my sake, serve thou false Tarquin so.

This brief abridgment of my will I make :
My soul and body to the skies and ground ;
My resolution, husband, do you take ;
Mine honour be the knife's, that makes my wound ;
My shame be his that did my fame confound ;
And all my fame that lives, disbursed be
To those that live, and think no shame of me.

Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will;
 How was I overseen that thou shalt see it!
 My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill;
 My life's foul deed, my life's fair end shall free it.
 Faint not, faint heart, but stoutly say, *so be it.*
 Yield to my hand; my hand shall conquer thee;
 Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors be.

This plot of death when sadly she had laid,
 And wip'd the brinish pearl from her bright eyes,
 With untun'd tongue she hoarsely call'd her maid,
 Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies;
 For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers flies.
 Poor Lucrece' cheeks unto her maid seem so
 As winter meads when sun doth melt their snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-morrow,
 With soft-slow tongue, true mark of modesty,
 And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow,
 (For why? her face wore sorrow's livery;)
 But durst not ask of her audaciously
 Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,
 Nor why her fair cheeks over-wash'd with woe.

But as the earth doth weep, the sun being set,
 Each flower moisten'd like a melting eye;
 Even so the maid with swelling drops 'gan wet
 Her circled eyne, enforc'd by sympathy
 Of those fair suns, set in her mistress' sky,
 Who in a salt-wav'd ocean quench their light,
 Which makes the maid weep like the dewy night.

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,
 Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling:
 One justly weeps; the other takes in hand
 No cause, but company, of her drops spilling:
 Their gentle sex to weep are often willing;
 Grieving themselves to guess at others' smarts,
 And then they drown their eyes, or break their hearts:

For men have marble, women waxen minds,
 And therefore are they form'd as marble will;
 The weak oppress'd, the impression of strange kinds
 Is form'd in them by force, by fraud, or skill:
 Then call them not the authors of their ill,
 No more than wax shall be accounted evil,
 Wherein is stamp'd the semblance of a devil.

Their smoothness, like a goodly champaign plain,
 Lays open all the little worms that creep :
 In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain
 Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep :
 Through crystal walls each little mote will peep :
 Though men can cover crimes with bold stern looks,
 Poor women's faces are their own faults' books.

No man inveigh against the wither'd flower,
 But chide rough winter that the flower hath kill'd !
 Not that devour'd, but that which doth devour,
 Is worthy blame. O let it not be hild
 Poor women's faults, that they are so fulfill'd
 With men's abuses : those proud lords, to blame,
 Make weak-made women tenants to their shame.

The precedent whereof in Lucrece view,
 Assail'd by night with circumstances strong
 Of present death, and shame that might ensue
 By that her death, to do her husband wrong :
 Such danger to resistance did belong,
 That dying fear through all her body spread ;
 And who cannot abuse a body dead ?

By this, mild patience bid fair Lucrece speak
 To the poor counterfeit of her complaining ;
 My girl, quoth she, on what occasion break
 Those tears from thee, that down thy cheeks are raining ?
 If thou dost weep for grief of my sustaining,
 Know, gentle wench, it small avails my mood :
 If tears could help, mine own would do me good.

But tell me, girl, when went—(and there she stayed
 Till after a deep groan) Tarquin from hence ?
 Madam, ere I was up, reply'd the maid,
 The more to blame my sluggard negligence :
 Yet with the fault I thus far can dispense ;
 Myself was stirring ere the break of day,
 And, ere I rose, was Tarquin gone away.

But lady, if your maid may be so bold,
 She would request to know your heaviness.
 O peace ! quoth Lucrece ; if it should be told,
 The repetition cannot make it less ;
 For more it is than I can well express :
 And that deep torture may be call'd a hell,
 When more is felt than one hath power to tell.

Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen—
 Yet save that labour, for I have them here.
 What should I say?—One of my husband's men,
 Bid thou be ready, by and by, to bear
 A letter to my lord, my love, my dear;
 Bid him with speed prepare to carry it :
 The cause craves haste, and it will soon be writ.

Her maid is gone, and she prepares to write,
 First hovering o'er the paper with her quill :
 Conceit and grief an eager combat fight ;
 What wit sets down, is blotted straight with will ;
 'This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill ;
 Much like a press of people at a door,
 Throng her inventions, which shall go before.

At last she thus begins : " Thou worthy lord
 Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,
 Health to thy person ! next vouchsafe to afford
 (If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see,)
 Some present speed to come and visit me :
 So I commend me from our house in grief ;
 My woes are tedious, though my words are brief."

Here folds she up the tenour of her woe,
 Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.
 By this short schedule Collatine may know
 Her grief, but not her grief's true quality ;
 She dares not thereof make discovery,
 Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse,
 Ere she with blood hath stain'd her stain'd excuse.

Besides, the life and feeling of her passion
 She hoards, to spend when he is by to hear her ;
 When sighs and groans and tears may grace the fashion
 Of her disgrace, the better so to clear her
 From that suspicion which the world might bear her.
 To shun this blot, she would not blot the letter
 With words, till action might become them better.

To see sad sights moves more than hear them told ;
 For then the eye interprets to the ear
 The heavy motion that it doth behold,
 When every part a part of woe doth bear.
 'Tis but a part of sorrow that we hear :
 Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow fords,
 And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words.

Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ,
At Ardea to my lord with more than haste :
The post attends, and she delivers it,
Charging the sour-fac'd groom to hie as fast
As lagging fowls before the northern blast.
Speed more than speed, but dull and slow she deems :
Extremity still urgeth such extremes.

The homely villein curt'sies to her low ;
And blushing on her, with a stedfast eye
Receives the scroll, without or yea or no,
And forth with bashful innocence doth hie.
But they whose guilt within their bosoms lie,
Imagine every eye beholds their blame ;
For Lucrece thought he blush'd to see her shame.

When, silly groom ! God wot, it was defect
Of spirit, life, and bold audacity.
Such harmless creatures have a due respect
To talk in deeds, while others saucily
Promise more speed, but do it leisurely :
Even so, this pattern of the worn-out age
Pawn'd honest looks, but laid no words to gage.

His kindled duty kindled her mistrust,
That two red fires in both their faces blazed ;
She thought he blush'd, as knowing Tarquin's lust,
And, blushing with him, wistly on him gazed ;
Her earnest eye did make him more amazed :
The more she saw the blood his cheeks replenish,
The more she thought he spy'd in her some blemish.

But long she thinks till he return again,
And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone.
The weary time she cannot entertain,
For now 'tis stale to sigh, to weep, and groan :
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,
That she her plaints a little while doth stay,
Pausing for means to mourn some newer way.

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy ;
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen's rape the city to destroy,
Threatening cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy ;
Which the conceited painter drew so proud,
As heaven (it seem'd) to kiss the turrets bow'd.

A thousand lamentable objects there,
In scorn of Nature, Art gave lifeless life :
Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,
Shed for the slaughter'd husband by the wife :
The red blood reek'd to shew the painter's strife ;
And dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy lights,
Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioneer
Begrin'd with sweat, and smeared all with dust ;
And from the towers of Troy there would appear
The very eyes of men through loop-holes thrust,
Gazing upon the Greeks with little lust :
Such sweet observance in this work was had,
That one might see those far-off eyes look sad.

In great commanders grace and majesty
You might behold, triumphing in their faces ;
In youth, quick bearing and dexterity ;
And here and there the painter interlaces
Pale cowards, marching on with trembling paces ;
Which heartless peasants did so well resemble,
That one would swear he saw them quake and tremble.

In Ajax and Ulysses, O what art
Of physiognomy might one behold !
The face of either 'cipher'd either's heart ;
Their face their manners most expressly told :
In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd ;
But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent,
Shew'd deep regard and smiling government.

There pleading might you see grave Nestor stand,
As 'twere encouraging the Greeks to fight ;
Making such sober action with his hand,
That it beguil'd attention, charm'd the sight :
In speech, it seem'd, his beard, all silver white,
Wagg'd up and down, and from his lips did fly
Thin winding breath, which purl'd up to the sky.

About him were a press of gaping faces,
Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice ;
All jointly listening, but with several graces,
As if some mermaid did their ears entice ;
Some high, some low, the painter was so nice ;
The scalps of many, almost hid behind,
To jump up higher seem'd, to mock the mind.

Here one man's hand lean'd on another's head,
His nose being shadow'd by his neighbour's ear ;
Here one being throng'd bears back, all blown and red ;
Another, smother'd, seems to pelt and swear ;
And in their rage such signs of rage their bear,
As, but for loss of Nestor's golden words,
It seem'd they would debate with angry swords.

For much imaginary work was there ;
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
That for Achilles' image stood his spear,
Grip'd in an armed hand ; himself, behind,
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind :
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
Stood for the whole to be imagined.

And from the walls of strong-besieged Troy,
When their brave hope, bold Hector, march'd to field,
Stood many Trojan mothers, sharing joy
To see their youthful sons bright weapons wield ;
And to their hope they such odd action yield,
That, through their light joy, seemed to appear
(Like bright things stain'd) a kind of heavy fear.

And, from the strond of Dardan where they fought,
To Simois' reedy banks the red blood ran,
Whose waves to imitate the battle sought
With swelling ridges ; and their ranks began
To break upon the galled shore, and then
Retire again, till meeting greater ranks
They join, and shoot their foam at Simois' banks.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
To find a face where all distress is stèl'd.
Many she sees, where cares have carved some,
But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
Till she despairing Heenba beheld,
Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,
Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies.

In her the painter had anatomiz'd
Time's ruin, beauty's wreck, and grim care's reign ;
Her cheeks with chaps and wrinkles were disguis'd ;
Of what she was, no semblance did remain :
Her blue blood chang'd to black in every vein,
Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes had fed,
Shew'd life imprison'd in a body dead.

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,
 And shapes her sorrow to the beldame's woes,
 Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,
 And bitter words to ban her cruel foes :
 The painter was no God to lend her those ;
 And therefore Lucrece swears he did her wrong,
 To give her so much grief, and not a tongue.

Poor instrument, quoth she, without a sound,
 I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue :
 And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
 And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
 And with my tears quench Troy that burns so long ;
 And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
 Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

Shew me the strumpet that began this stir,
 That with my nails her beauty I may tear.
 Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur
 This load of wrath that burning Troy doth bear ;
 Thy eye kindled the fire that burneth here :
 And here in Troy, for trespass of thine eye,
 The sire, the son, the dame, and daughter, die.

Why should the private pleasure of some one
 Become the public plague of many more ?
 Let sin, alone committed, light alone
 Upon his head that hath transgressed so.
 Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe :
 For one's offence why should so many fall,
 To plague a private sin in general ?

Lo here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
 Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swoonds ;
 Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
 And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,
 And one man's lust these many lives confounds :
 Had doting Priam check'd his son's desire,
 Troy had been bright with fame, and not with fire.

Here feelingly she weeps Troy's painted woes :
 For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell,
 Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes ;
 Then little strength rings out the doleful knell :
 So Lucrece set a-work, sad tales doth tell
 To pencill'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow ;
 She lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting, round,
 And whom she finds forlorn, she doth lament :
 At last she sees a wretched image bound,
 That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent ;
 His face, though full of cares, yet shew'd content :
 Onward to 'Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
 So mild, that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.

In him the painter labour'd with his skill
 To hide deceit, and give the harmless show
 An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
 A brow unbent, that seem'd to welcome woe ;
 Cheeks, neither red nor pale, but mingled so
 That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
 Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,
 He entertain'd a show so seeming just,
 And therein so ensconced his secret evil,
 That jealousy itself could not mistrust
 False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust
 Into so bright a day such black-fac'd storms,
 Or blot with hell-born sin such saint-like forms.

'The well-skill'd workman this mild image drew
 For perjurd Sinon, whose enchanting story
 The credulous old Priam after slew ;
 Whose words, like wild-fire, burnt the shining glory
 Of rich-built Ilion, that the skies were sorry,
 And little stars shot from their fixed places,
 When their glass fell wherein they view'd their faces.

This picture she advisedly perus'd,
 And chid the painter for his wondrous skill ;
 Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abus'd,
 So fair a form lodg'd not a mind so ill ;
 And still on him she gaz'd, and gazing still,
 Such signs of truth in his plain face she spy'd
 That she concludes the picture was bely'd.

It cannot be, quoth she, that so much guile
 (She would have said) *can lurk in such a look ;*
 But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while,
 And from her tongue, *can lurk from cannot* took ;
It cannot be she in that sense forsook,
 And turn'd it thus : " It cannot be, I find,
 But such a face should bear a wicked mind :

For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,
So sober-sad, so weary, and so mild,
(As if with grief or travail he had fainted)
To me came Tarquin armed ; so beguil'd
With outward honesty, but yet defil'd
 With inward vice: as Priam him did cherish,
 So did I Tarquin ; so my Troy did perish.

Look, look, how listening Priam wets his eyes,
To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds.
Priam, why art thou old, and yet not wise?
For every tear he falls, a Trojan bleeds ;
His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds :
 Those round clear pearls of his that move thy pity
 Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

Such devils steal effects from lightless hell ;
For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,
And in that cold, hot-burning fire doth dwell ;
These contraries such unity do hold,
Only to flatter fools, and make them bold :
 So Priam's trust false Sinon's tears doth flatter,
 That he finds means to burn his Troy with water."

Here, all enrag'd, such passion her assails,
That patience is quite beaten from her breast.
She tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,
Comparing him to that unhappy guest
Whose deed hath made herself herself detest :
 At last she smilingly with this gives o'er ;
 Fool ! fool ! quoth she, his wounds will not be sore.

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
And time doth weary time with her complaining.
She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow,
And both she thinks too long with her remaining :
Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining.
 Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps ;
 And they that watch, see time how slow it creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipp'd her thought,
That she with painted images hath spent ;
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment ;
Losing her woes in shows of discontent.
 It caseth some, though none it ever cured,
 To think their dolour others have endur'd.

But now the mindful messenger, come back,
Brings home his lord and other company ;
Who finds his Lucrece clad in mourning black ;
And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky.

These water-galls in her dim element
Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares :
Her eyes, though sod in tears, look'd red and raw,
Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares,
But stood, like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wondering each other's chance.

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins : What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befallen, that thou dost trembling stand ?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent ?
Why art thou thus attir'd in discontent ?

Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrows fire,
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe :
At length address'd to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe ;
While Collatine and his consorted lords
With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale swan in her watery nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending :
Few words, quoth she, shall fit the trespass best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending :
In me more woes than words are now depending ;
And my laments would be drawn out too long,
To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

Then be this all the task it hath to say :—
Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed
A stranger came, and on that pillow lay
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head ;
And what wrong else may be imagined
By foul enforcement might be done to me,
From that, alas ! thy Lucrece is not free.

For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature, with a flaming light,
And softly cry'd, Awake, thou Roman dame,
And entertain my love ; else lasting shame
On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
If thou my love's desire do contradict.

For some hard-favour'd groom of thine, quoth he,
Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee,
And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of lust, and so did kill
The leechers in their deed : this act will be
My fame, and thy perpetual infamy.

With this I did begin to start and cry,
And then against my heart he set his sword,
Swearing, unless I took all patiently,
I should not live to speak another word :
So should my shame still rest upon record,
And never be forgot in mighty Rome
The adulterate death of Lucrece and her groom.

Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
And far the weaker with so strong a fear :
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak ;
No rightful plea might plead for justice there :
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes,
And when the judge is robb'd, the prisoner dies.

O teach me how to make mine own excuse !
Or, at the least, this refuge let me find ;
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind ;
That was not fore'd ; that never was inclin'd
To accessory yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure.

Lo here, the hopeless merchant of this loss,
With head declin'd, and voice damm'd up with woe,
With sad-set eyes, and wretched arms across,
From lips new-waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away, that stops his answer so :
But wretched as he is, he strives in vain ;
What he breathes out, his breath drinks up again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide
Out-runs the eye that doth behold his haste ;
Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride
Back to the strait that forc'd him on so fast ;
In rage sent out, recall'd in rage, being past :
Even so he sighs, his sorrows, make a saw,
To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

Which speechless woe of his, poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh :
Dear lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth
Another power ; no flood by raining slaketh.
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh
More feeling-painful : let it then suffice
To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy Lucrece,—now attend me ;
Be suddenly revenged on my foe,
Thine, mine, his own ; suppose thou dost defend me
From what is past : the help that thou shalt lend me
Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die ;
For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

But ere I name him, you fair lords, quoth she,
(Speaking to those that came with Collatine)
Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine ;
For 'tis a meritorious fair design,
To chase injustice with revengeful arms :
Knights, by their oaths, should right poor ladies' harms.

At this request, with noble disposition
Each present lord began to promise aid,
As bound in knighthood to her imposition,
Longing to hear the hateful foe bewray'd.
But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,
The protestation stops. O speak, quoth she,
How may this forced stain be wiped from me ?

What is the quality of mine offence,
Being constrain'd with dreadful circumstance ?
May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,
My low-declined honour to advance ?
May any terms acquit me from this chance ?
The poison'd fountain clears itself again ;
And why not I from this compelled stain ?

With this, they all at once began to say,
Her body's stain her mind untainted clears;
While with a joyless smile she turns away
The face, that map which deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune, carv'd in it with tears.

No, no, quoth she, no dame, hereafter living,
By my excuse shall claim excuses giving.

Here with a sigh, as if her heart would break,
She throws forth Tarquin's name : *He, he*, she says,
But more than *he* her poor tongue could not speak ;
Till after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
She utters this : He, he, fair lords, 'tis he,
That guides this hand to give this wound to me.

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathed :
That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
Of that polluted prison where it breathed :
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeathed
Her winged sprite, and through her wounds doth fly
Life's lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone-still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,
Stood Collatine and all his lordly crew ;
Till Lucrece' father that beholds her bleed,
Himself on her self-slaughter'd body threw ;
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
The murderous knife, and as it left the place
Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase ;

And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
Circles her body in on every side,
Who like a late-sack'd island vastly stood
Bare and unpeopled, in this fearful flood.
Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,
And some look'd black, and that false Tarquin stain'd.

About the mourning and congealed face
Of that black blood, a watery rigol goes,
Which seems to weep upon the tainted place :
And ever since, as pitying Lucrece' woes,
Corrupted blood some watery token shows ;
And blood untainted still doth red abide,
Blushing at that which is so putrify'd.

Daughter, dear daughter, old Lucretius cries,
That life was mine, which thou hast here depriv'd.
If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live, now Lucrece is unliv'd?
Thou wast not to this end from me deriv'd.
If children pre-decease progenitors,
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new-born ;
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,
Shows me a bare-bon'd death by time out-worn ;
O, from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn !
And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,
That I no more can see what once I was.

O time, cease thou thy course, and last no longer,
If they surcease to be, that should survive.
Shall rotten death make conquest of the stronger,
And leave the faltering feeble souls alive?
The old bees die, the young possess their hive :
Then live sweet Lucrece, live again, and see
Thy father die, and not thy father thee !

By this starts Collatine as from a dream,
And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place ;
And then in key-cold Lucrece' bleeding stream
He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
And counterfeits to die with her a space ;
Till manly shame bids him possess his breath,
And live to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul
Hath serv'd a dumb arrest upon his tongue ;
Who mad that sorrow should his use control,
Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,
Begins to talk ; but through his lips do throng
Weak words, so thick come, in his poor heart's aid,
That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime Tarquin was pronounced plain,
But through his teeth as if the name he tore.
This windy tempest, till it blow up rain,
Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more ;
At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er :
Then son and father weep with equal strife,
Who should weep most for daughter or for wife.

The one doth call her his, the other his,
 Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.
 The father says, she's mine : O mine she is,
 Replies her husband : Do not take away
 My sorrow's interest ; let no mourner say
 He weeps for her, for she was only mine,
 And only must be wail'd by Collatine.

O, quoth Lueretius, I did give that life,
 Which she too early and too late hath spill'd.
 Woe, woe, quoth Collatine, she was my wife.
 I owned her, and 'tis mine that she hath kill'd.
My daughter and my wife with clamours fill'd
 The dispers'd air, who holding Luerece' life,
 Answer'd their cries, *my daughter and my wife*.

Brutus, who pluck'd the knife from Luerece' side,
 Seeing such emulation in their woe,
 Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
 Burying in Luerece' wound his folly's show.
 He with the Romans was esteemed so
 As silly jeering idiots are with kings,
 For sportive words, and uttering foolish things.

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
 Wherein deep policy did him disguise ;
 And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly,
 To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
 Thou wronged lord of Rome, quoth he, arise ;
 Let my unsounded self, suppos'd a fool,
 Now set thy long-experienc'd wit to school.

Why, Collatine, is woe the cure for woe ?
 Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous deeds ?
 Is it revenge to give thyself a blow,
 For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds ?
 Such childish humour from weak minds proceeds :
 Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
 To slay herself, that should have slain her foe.

Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
 In such relenting dew of lamentations,
 But kneel with me, and help to bear thy part,
 To rouse our Roman gods with invocations,
 That they will suffer these abominations,
 Since Rome herself in them doth stand disgraced,
 By our strong arms from forth her fair streets chased.

Now by the Capitol that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stained,
By heaven's fair sun, that breeds the fat earth's store,
By all our country rights in Rome maintained,
And by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complained
Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
We will revenge the death of this true wife.

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kiss'd the fatal knife to end his vow ;
And to his protestation urg'd the rest,
Who wondering at him, did him words allow :
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow ;
And that deep vow which Brutus made before,
He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence ;
To show the bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence :
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly did give consent,
To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.

SONNETS.

I.

FROM fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory :
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own buduriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding,
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

II.

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held :
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days ;
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou could'st answer—"This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse—"
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new-made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

III.

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest,
 Now is the time that face should form another;
 Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
 For where is she so fair, whose un-car'd womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond, will be the tomb
 Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
 Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
 Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
 So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
 Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
 But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
 Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

IV.

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
 Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
 Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
 And being frank, she lends to those are free.
 Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
 The bounteous largess given thee to give?
 Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
 So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
 For having traffic with thyself alone,
 Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.
 Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,
 What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
 Thy unus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
 Which, used, lives thy executor to be.

V.

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
 The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
 Will play the tyrants to the very same,
 And that unfair which fairly doth excell;
 For never-resting time leads summer on
 To hideous winter, and confounds him there;
 Sap check'd with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
 Beauty o'ersnow'd, and bareness every where:
 Then, were not summer's distillation left,
 A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
 Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
 Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was.
 But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
 Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

VI.

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
 In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd :
 Make sweet some phial, treasure thou some place
 With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
 That use is not forbidden usury,
 Which happies those that pay the willing loan ;
 That's for thyself to breed another thee,
 Or ten times happier, be it ten for one ;
 Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
 If ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee:
 Then, what could death do if thou should'st depart,
 Leaving thee living in posterity ?
 Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
 To be death's conquest, and make worms thine heir.

VII.

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
 Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
 Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
 Serving with looks his sacred majesty ;
 And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
 Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
 Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
 Attending on his golden pilgrimage ;
 But when from high-most pitch, with weary car,
 Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,
 The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
 From his low tract, and look another way :
 So thou, thyself out-going in thy noon,
 Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.

VIII.

Musick to hear, why hear'st thou musick sadly ?
 Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
 Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly ?
 Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy ?
 If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
 By unions married, do offend thine ear,
 They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
 In singleness the parts that thou should'st bear.
 Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering ;
 Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
 Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing :
 Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
 Sings this to thee, " thou single wilt prove none."

IX.

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye,
That thou consum'st thyself in single life ?
Ah ! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife ;
The world will be thy widow and still weep,
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.
Look, what an unthrif in the world doth spend,
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it ;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits,
That on himself such murderous shame commits.

X.

For shame ! deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident.
Grant if thou wilt, thou art lov'd of many,
But that thou none lov'st, is most evident ;
For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,
That 'gainst thyself thou stiek'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O change thy thought, that I may change my mind !
Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love ?
Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself, at least, kind-hearted prove :
Make thee another self, for love of me,
That beauty still may live in thine and thee.

XI.

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st
In one of thine, from that which thou departest ;
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st,
Thou may'st call thine, when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase ;
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay :
If all were minded so, the times should cease,
And threescore years would make the world away.
Let those whom nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish :
Look whom she best endow'd, she gave thee more ;
Which bounteous gift thou should'st in bounty cherish ;
She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby,
Thou should'st print more, nor let that copy die.

XII.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
 And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
 When I behold the violet past prime,
 And sable curls, all silver'd o'er with white;
 When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
 Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
 And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
 Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;
 Then of thy beauty do I question make,
 That thou among the wastes of time must go,
 Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
 And die as fast as they see others grow;
 And nothing 'gainst time's scythe can make defence,
 Save breed, to brave him, when he takes thee hence.

XIII.

O that you were yourself! but, love, you are
 No longer your's, than you yourself here live:
 Against this coming end you should prepare,
 And your sweet semblance to some other give.
 So should that beauty which you hold in lease,
 Find no determination: then you were
 Yourself again, after yourself's decease,
 When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
 Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
 Which husbandry in honour might uphold
 Against the stormy gusts of winter's day,
 And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
 O! none but unthrifths:—Dear, my love, you know,
 You had a father; let your son say so.

XIV.

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck;
 And yet methinks I have astronomy,
 But not to tell of good, or evil luck,
 Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality:
 Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
 Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
 Or say, with princes if it shall go well,
 By oft predict that I in heaven find:
 But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
 And (constant stars) in them I read such art,
 As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
 If from thyself to store thou would'st convert:
 Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
 Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

XV.

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge state presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky;
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
'Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful time debateth with decay,
'To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And, all in war with time, for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

XVI.

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours;
And many maiden gardens yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear you living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this, 'Time's pencil, or my pupil pen,
Neither in inward worth, nor outward fair,
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.
'To give away yourself, keeps yourself still;
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

XVII.

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, this poet lies,
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.
So should my papers, yellow'd with their age,
Be scorn'd, like old men of less truth than tongue;
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage,
And stretch'd metre of an antique song:
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice;—in it, and in my rhyme.

XVIII.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest;
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XIX.

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
 And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
 Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
 And burn the long-liv'd phoenix in her blood;
 Make glad and sorry seasons, as thou fleet'st,
 And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
 To the wide world, and all her fading sweets;
 But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
 O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
 Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
 Him in thy course untainted do allow,
 For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
 Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
 My love shall in my verse ever live young.

XX.

A woman's face, with nature's own hand painted,
 Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
 A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
 With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
 Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
 A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
 Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth.
 And for a woman wert thou first created;
 Till nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
 And by addition me of thee defeated,
 By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
 But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
 Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

XXI.

So it is not with me as with that muse,
 Stir'd by a painted beauty to his verse;
 Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
 And every fair with his fair doth rehearse;
 Making a couplement of proud compare,
 With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
 With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
 That heaven's air in his huge rondure hems.
 O let me, true in love, but truly write,
 And then believe me, my love is as fair
 As any mother's child, though not so bright
 As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air:
 Let them say more that like of hear-say well;
 I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

XXII.

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
 So long as youth and thou are of one date;
 But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
 Then look I death my days should expiate.
 For all that beauty that doth cover thee,
 Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
 Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me;
 How can I then be elder than thou art?
 O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary,
 As I not for myself, but for thee will;
 Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
 As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
 Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;
 Thou gav'st me thine, not to give back again.

XXIII.

As an unperfected actor on the stage,
 Who with his fear is put beside his part,
 Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
 Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
 So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
 The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
 And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
 O'er-charg'd with burthen of mine own love's might.
 O let my books be then the eloquence
 And dumb presagers of my speaking breast;
 Who plead for love, and look for recompence,
 More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
 O learn to read what silent love hath writ:
 To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

XXIV.

Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath stèl'd
 Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
 My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
 And perspective it is best painter's art.
 For through the painter must you see his skill,
 To find where your true image pictur'd lies,
 Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
 That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
 Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done;
 Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
 Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun
 Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
 Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
 They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

XXV.

Let those who are in favour with their stars,
 Of public honour and proud titles boast,
 Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
 Unlook'd-for joy in that I honour most.
 Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread,
 But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
 And in themselves their pride lies buried,
 For at a frown they in their glory die.
 The painful warrior famoused for fight,
 After a thousand victories once foil'd,
 Is from the book of honour razed quite,
 And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
 Then happy I, that love and am beloved,
 Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

XXVI.

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
 Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
 To thee I send this written embassy,
 To witness duty, not to shew my wit.
 Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
 May make seem bare, in wanting words to shew it;
 But that I hope some good conceit of thine
 In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it:
 Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
 Points on me graciously with fair aspèct,
 And puts apparel on my tattered loving,
 To shew me worthy of thy sweet respect:
 Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee, [me.
 Till then, not shew my head where thou may'st prove

XXVII.

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
 The dear repose for limbs with travel tired ;
 But then begins a journey in my head,
 To work my mind, when body's work's expired :
 For then my thought's (from far where I abide)
 Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
 And keep my drooping eye-lids open wide,
 Looking on darkness which the blind do see,
 Save that my soul's imaginary sight
 Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
 Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
 Makes black night beautiful, and her old face new.
 Lo thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,
 For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

XXVIII.

How can I then return in happy plight,
 That am debarr'd the benefit of rest ?
 When day's oppression is not eas'd by night,
 But day by night and night by day oppress'd ?
 And each, though enemies to either's reign,
 Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
 The one by toil, the other to complain
 How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
 I tell the day, to please him, thou art bright,
 And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven :
 So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night ;
 When sparkling stars twine not, thou gild'st the even.
 But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
 And night doth nightly make grief's length seem
 stronger.

XXIX.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweep my out-cast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least ;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee,—and then my state
 (Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate ;
 For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings,
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear times' waste :
 Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
 And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
 And moan the expence of many a vanish'd sight.
 Then can I grieve at grievances fore-gone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
 Which I new pay as if not pay'd before.
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

XXXI.

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,
 Which I by lacking have supposed dead ;
 And there reigns love and all love's loving parts,
 And all those friends which I thought buried.
 How many a holy and obsequious tear
 Hath dear religious love stolen from mine eye,
 As interest of the dead, which now appear
 But things remov'd, that hidden in thee lie !
 Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
 Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
 Who all their parts of me to thee did give ;
 That due of many now is thine alone :
 Their images I lov'd I view in thee,
 And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

XXXII.

If thou survive my well-contented day,
 When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
 And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
 These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
 Compare them with the bettering of the time ;
 And though they be out-stripp'd by every pen,
 Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
 Exceeded by the height of happier men.
 O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought !
*Had my friend's muse grown with this growing age,
 A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
 To march in ranks of better equipage :*
*But since he died, and poets better prove,
 Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.*

XXXIII.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
 Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy ;
 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
 With ugly rack on his celestial face,
 And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
 Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :
 Even so my sun one early morn did shine,
 With all triumphant splendour on my brow ;
 But out ! alack ! he was but one hour mine,
 The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
 Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth ;
 Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

XXXIV.

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
 And make me travel forth without my cloak,
 To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
 Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke ?
 'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
 To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
 For no man well of such a salve can speak,
 That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace :
 Nor can thy shame give physick to my grief ;
 Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss :
 The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
 To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
 Ah ! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
 And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

XXXV.

No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done :
 Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud ;
 Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
 And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
 All men make faults, and even I in this,
 Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
 Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
 Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are :
 For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,
 (Thy adverse party is thy advocate,)
 And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence :
 Such civil war is in my love and hate,
 That I an accessory needs must be
 To that sweet thief, which sourly robs from me.

XXXVI.

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
 Although our undivided loves are one :
 So shall those blots that do with me remain,
 Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
 In our two loves there is but one respect,
 Though in our lives a separable spite,
 Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
 Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
 I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
 Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame ;
 Nor thou with publick kindness honour me,
 Unless thou take that honour from thy name :
 But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
 As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XXXVII.

As a decrepit father takes delight
 To see his active child do deeds of youth,
 So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,
 Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth ;
 For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
 Or any of these all, or all, or more,
 Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
 I make my love engrafted to this store :
 So then I am not lame, poor, nor despis'd,
 Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give,
 That I in thy abundance am suffic'd,
 And by a part of all thy glory live.
 Look what is best, that best I wish in thee ;
 This wish I have ; then ten times happy me !

XXXVIII.

How can my muse want subject to invent,
 While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
 Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
 For every vulgar paper to rehearse ?
 O give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
 Worthy perusal, stand against thy sight,
 For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
 When thou thyself dost give invention light ?
 Be thou the tenth muse, ten times more in worth
 Than those old nine, which rhimers invoke ;
 And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
 Eternal numbers to out-live long date.
 If my slight muse do please these curious days,
 The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

XXXIX.

O how thy worth with manners may I sing,
 When thou art all the better part of me!
 What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
 And what is't but mine own, when I praise thee?
 Even for this let us divided live,
 And our dear love lose name of single one,
 That by this separation I may give
 That due to thee, which thou deserv'st alone.
 O absence, what a torment would'st thou prove,
 Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
 To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
 (Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,)
 And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
 By praising him here, who doth hence remain.

XL.

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all;
 What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
 No love, my love, that thou may'st true love call;
 All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more.
 Then if for my love thou my love receivest,
 I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest;
 But yet be blam'd, if thou thyself deceivest
 By wilful taste of what thyself refuseth.
 I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
 Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
 And yet love knows, it is a greater grief
 To bear love's wrong, than hate's known injury.
 Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
 Kill me with spites; yet we must not be foes.

XLI.

Those petty wrongs that liberty commits,
 When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
 Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
 For still temptation follows where thou art.
 Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
 Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd;
 And when a woman wooes, what woman's son
 Will sourly leave her till she have prevail'd.
 Ah me! but yet thou might'st, my sweet, forbear,
 And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
 Who lead thee in their riot even there
 Where thou art forc'd to break a two-fold truth;
 Her's, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
 Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

XLII.

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
 And yet it may be said I lov'd her dearly ;
 That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief.
 A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
 Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye :—
 Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her ;
 And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
 Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
 If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
 And losing her, my friend hath found that loss ;
 Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
 And both for my sake lay on me this cross :
 But here's the joy ; my friend and I are one ;
 Sweet flattery !—then she loves but me alone.

XLIII.

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
 For all the day they view things unrespected ;
 But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
 And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed ;
 Then thou whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
 How would thy shadow's form form happy show
 To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
 When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so ?
 How would (I say) mine eyes be blessed made
 By looking on thee in the living day,
 When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
 Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay ?
 All days are nights to see, till I see thee, [me.
 And nights, bright days, when dreams do show thee

XLIV.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
 Injurious distance should not stop my way ;
 For then, despite of space, I would be brought
 From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
 No matter then, although my foot did stand
 Upon the farthest earth remov'd from thee.
 For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,
 As soon as think the place where he would be.
 But ah ! thought kills me, that I am not thought,
 To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
 But that, so much of earth and water wrought,
 I must attend time's leisure with my moan ;
 Receiving nought by elements so slow
 But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

XLV.

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
 Are both with thee, wherever I abide;
 The first my thought, the other my desire,
 These present-absent with swift motion slide.
 For when these quicker elements are gone
 In tender embassy of love to thee,
 My life being made of four, with two alone,
 Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy;
 Until life's composition be recured
 By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
 Who even but now come back again, assured
 Of thy fair health, recounting it to me:
 This told, I joy; but then no longer glad,
 I send them back again, and straight grow sad.

XLVI.

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
 How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
 Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
 My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
 My heart doth plead, that thou in him dost lie,
 (A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes,)
 But the defendant doth that plea deny,
 And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
 To 'cide this title is impanelled
 A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart;
 And by their verdict is determined
 The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part:
 As thus; mine eye's due is thy outward part,
 And my heart's right thy inward love of heart.

XLVII.

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
 And each doth good turns now unto the other:
 When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,
 Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
 With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
 And to the painted banquet bids my heart:
 Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
 And in his thoughts of love doth share a part:
 So, either by thy picture or my love,
 Thyself away art present still with me;
 For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
 And I am still with them, and they with thee;
 Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
 Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

XLVIII.

How careful was I when I took my way,
 Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
 That, to my use, it might unused stay
 From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!
 But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
 Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
 Thou, best of dearest, and mine only care,
 Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
 Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
 Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
 Within the gentle closure of my breast,
 From whence at pleasure thou may'st come and part;
 And even thence thou wilt be stolen I fear,
 For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

XLIX.

Against that time, if ever that time come,
 When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
 Whenas thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
 Call'd to that audit by advis'd respects,
 Against that time, when thou shalt strangely pass,
 And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
 When love, converted from the thing it was,
 Shall reasons find of settled gravity,
 Against that time do I ensconce me here
 Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
 And this my hand against myself uprear,
 To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:
 To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
 Since, why to love, I can allege no cause.

L.

How heavy do I journey on the way,
 When what I seek,—my weary travel's end,—
 Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
 "Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend!"
 The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
 Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
 As if by some instinct the wretch did know
 His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee:
 The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
 That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
 Which heavily he answers with a groan,
 More sharp to me than spurring to his side;
 For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
 My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

L I.

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
 Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed :
 From where thou art why should I haste me thence?
 Till I return, of posting is no need.
 O, what excuse will my poor beast then find,
 When swift extremity can seem but slow?
 Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind;
 In winged speed no motion shall I know:
 Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
 Therefore desire, of perfect love being made,
 Shall neigh (no dull flesh) in his fiery race;
 But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade;
 Since from thee going he went wilful slow,
 Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.

L II.

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
 Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
 The which he will not every hour survey,
 For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
 Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
 Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
 Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
 Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
 So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
 Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
 To make some special instant special-blest,
 By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
 Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
 Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

L III.

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
 That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
 Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
 And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
 Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
 Is poorly imitated after you;
 On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
 And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
 Speak of the spring, and foison of the year;
 The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
 The other as your bounty doth appear,
 And you in every blessed shape we know.
 In all external grace you have some part,
 But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

LIV.

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
 By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
 The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
 For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
 The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye,
 As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
 Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
 When summer's breath their masked buds discloses.
 But, for their virtue only is their show,
 They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade;
 Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
 And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
 When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth.

LV.

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
 Of princes, shall out-live this powerful rhyme;
 But you shall shine more bright in these contents
 Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
 When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
 And broils root out the work of masonry,
 Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
 The living record of your memory.
 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
 Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room,
 Even in the eyes of all posterity
 That wear this world out to the ending doom.
 So till the judgment that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

LVI.

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said,
 Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
 Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
 To-morrow sharpen'd in his former might:
 So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill
 Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,
 To-morrow see again, and do not kill
 The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.
 Let this sad interim like the ocean be
 Which parts the shore, where two contracted-new
 Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
 Return of love, more blest may be the view:
 Or call it winter, which being full of care, [rare.
 Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more

LVII.

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
 Upon the hours and times of your desire ?
 I have no precious time at all to spend,
 Nor services to do, till you require.
 Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,
 Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
 Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
 When you have bid your servant once adieu ;
 Nor dare I question with my jealous thought,
 Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
 But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought,
 Save, where you are how happy you make those :
 So true a fool is love, that in your will
 (Though you do any thing) he thinks no ill.

LVIII.

That God forbid, that made me first your slave,
 I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
 Or at your hand the account of hours to crave,
 Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure !
 Oh let me suffer (being at your beck)
 The imprison'd absence of your liberty,
 And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check
 Without accusing yon of injury.
 Be where you list ; your charter is so strong,
 That you yourself may privilege your time :
 Do what you will, to you it doth belong
 Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
 I am to wait, though waiting so be hell ;
 Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

LIX.

If there be nothing new, but that, which is,
 Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd,
 Which labouring for invention bear amiss
 The second burthen of a former child ?
 O that record could with a backward look,
 Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
 Show me your image in some antique book,
 Since mind at first in character was done !
 That I might see what the old world could say
 To this composed wonder of your frame ;
 Whether we are mended or wher better they,
 Or whether revolution be the same.
 O ! sure I am, the wits of former days
 To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

LX.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end;
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
 Nativity once in the main of light,
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And time that gave, doth now his gift confound.
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow;
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
 And yet, to times in hope, my verse shall stand,
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LXI.

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open
 My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
 Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
 While shadows, like to thee, do mock my sight?
 Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
 So far from home, into my deeds to pry,
 To find out shames and idle hours in me,
 The scope and tenour of thy jealousy?
 O no! thy love, though much, is not so great;
 It is my love that keeps mine eye awake;
 Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
 To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
 For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
 From me far off, with others all-too-near.

LXII.

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
 And all my soul, and all my every part;
 And for this sin there is no remedy,
 It is so grounded inward in my heart.
 Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
 No shape so true, no truth of such account,
 And for myself mine own worth do define,
 As I all other in all worths surmount.
 But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
 'Bated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity,
 Mine own self-love quite contrary I read,
 Self so self-loving were iniquity.
 'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise,
 Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

LXIII.

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn ;
When hours have drain'd his blood, and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles ; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night ;
And all those beauties, whereof now he's king,
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring ;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

LXIV.

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd
The rich proud east of out-worn bury'd age ;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-ras'd,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage ;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the wat'ry main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store ;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay ;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminat—
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

LXV.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower ?
O how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays ?
O fearful meditation ! where, alack !
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid ?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back ?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid ?
O none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

LXVI.

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,—
 As, to behold desert a beggar born,
 And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
 And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
 And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
 And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
 And strength by limping sway disabled,
 And art made tongue-ty'd by authority,
 And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
 And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
 And captive Good attending captain Ill:
 Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
 Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

LXVII.

Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
 And with his presence grace impiety,
 That sin by him advantage should atchieve,
 And lace itself with his society?
 Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
 And steal dead seeing of his living hue?
 Why should pure beauty indirectly seek
 Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
 Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,
 Beggar'd of blood, to blush through lively veins?
 For she hath no exchequer now but his,
 And proud of many, lives upon his gains.
 O, him she stores, to show what wealth she had,
 In days long since, before these last so bad.

LXVIII.

Thus is his cheek the map of days out-worn,
 When beauty liv'd and died as flowers do now,
 Before these bastard signs of fair were borne,
 Or durst inhabit on a living brow;
 Before the golden tresses of the dead,
 The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
 To live a second life on second head,
 Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:
 In him those holy antique hours are seen,
 Without all ornament, itself, and true,
 Making no summer of another's green,
 Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
 And him as for a map doth nature store,
 To show false art what beauty was of yore.

LXIX.

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view,
 Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend :
 All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,
 Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
 Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown'd ;
 But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,
 In other accents do this praise confound,
 By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
 They look into the beauty of thy mind,
 And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds ; [kind,
 Then (churls) their thoughts, although their eyes were
 To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds :
 But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
 To solve is this,—that thou dost common grow.

LXX.

That thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect,
 For slander's mark was ever yet the fair ;
 The ornament of beauty is suspect,
 A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
 So thou be good, slander doth but approve
 Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time ;
 For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
 And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
 Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
 Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd ;
 Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
 To tie up envy, evermore enlarg'd :
 If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
 Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts should'st owe.

LXXI.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell :
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not
 The hand that writ it ; for I love you so,
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
 O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse ;
 But let your love even with my life decay :
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
 And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXII.

O, lest the world should task you to recite
 What merit liv'd in me, that you should love
 After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
 For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
 Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
 To do more for me than mine own desert,
 And hang more praise upon deceased I,
 Than niggard truth would willingly impart;
 O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
 That you for love speak well of me untrue,
 My name be buried where my body is,
 And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
 For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,
 And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

LXXIII.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
 As after sun-set fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
 Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
 This thou perceiv'st which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

LXXIV.

But be contented : when that fell arrest
 Without all bail shall carry me away,
 My life hath in this line some interest,
 Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
 When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
 The very part was consecrate to thee.
 The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
 My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
 So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
 The prey of worms, my body being dead;
 The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
 Too base of thee to be remembered.
 The worth of that, is that which it contains,
 And that is this, and this with thee remains.

LXXV.

So are you to my thoughts, as food to life,
 Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground,
 And for the peace of you I hold such strife
 As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found;
 Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
 Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure;
 Now counting best to be with you alone,
 Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure:
 Sometime, all full with feasting on your sight,
 And by and by clean starved for a look;
 Possessing or pursuing no delight,
 Save what is had or must from you be took.
 Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
 Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

LXXVI.

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
 So far from variation or quick change?
 Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
 To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
 Why write I still all one, ever the same,
 And keep invention in a noted weed,
 That every word doth almost tell my name,
 Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
 O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
 And you and love are still my argument;
 So all my best is dressing old words new,
 Spending again what is already spent:
 For as the sun is daily new and old,
 So is my love still telling what is told.

LXXVII.

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
 Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste;
 The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
 And of this book this learning may'st thou taste.
 The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,
 Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
 Thou by thy dial's shady stealth may'st know
 Time's thievish progress to eternity.
 Look, what thy memory cannot contain,
 Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
 Those children nurs'd, deliver'd from thy brain,
 To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
 These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
 Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.

LXXVIII.

So oft have I invok'd thee for my muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse,
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing,
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee.
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be ;
But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance.

LXXIX.

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace ;
But now my gracious numbers are decay'd,
And my sick muse doth give another place.
I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen ;
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour ; beauty doth he give,
And found it in thy cheek ; he can afford
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.

LXXX.

O how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-ty'd, speaking of your fame !
But since your worth (wide, as the ocean is,)
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride ;
Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride :
Then if he thrive, and I be cast away,
The worst was this ;—my love was my decay.

LXXXI.

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
 Or you survive when I in earth am rotten ;
 From hence your memory death cannot take,
 Although in me each part will be forgotten.
 Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
 Though I, once gone, to all the world must die.
 The earth can yield me but a common grave,
 When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
 Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
 Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read ;
 And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
 When all the breathers of this world are dead ;
 You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen,) [men.
 Where breath most breathes,—even in the mouths of

LXXXII.

I grant thou wert not married to my muse,
 And therefore may'st without attaint o'er-look
 The dedicated words which writers use
 Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
 Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
 Finding thy worth a limit past my praise ;
 And therefore art enforc'd to seek anew
 Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
 And do so, love ; yet when they have devis'd
 What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
 Thou truly fair wert truly sympathiz'd
 In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend ;
 And their gross painting might be better us'd
 Where cheeks need blood ; in thee it is abus'd.

LXXXIII.

I never saw that you did painting need,
 And therefore to your fair no painting set.
 I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
 The barren tender of a poet's debt :
 And therefore have I slept in your report,
 That you yourself, being extant, well might show
 How far a modern quill doth come too short,
 Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.
 This silence for my sin you did impute,
 Which shall be most my glory, being dumb ;
 For I impair not beauty being mute,
 When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
 There lives more life in one of your fair eyes,
 Than both your poets can in praise devise.

LXXXIV.

Who is it that says most? which can say more,
 Than this rich praise,—that you alone are you?
 In whose confine immured is the store
 Which should example where your equal grew.
 Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,
 That to his subject lends not some small glory;
 But he that writes of you, if he can tell
 That you are you, so dignifies his story,
 Let him but copy what in you is writ,
 Not making worse what nature made so clear,
 And such a counter-part shall fame his wit,
 Making his style admired every where.
 You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
 Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

LXXXV.

My tongue-ty'd muse in manners holds her still,
 While comments of your praise, richly compil'd,
 Reserve their character with golden quill,
 And precious phrase by all the muses fil'd.
 I think good thoughts, while others write good words,
 And, like unletter'd clerk, still cry *Amen*
 To every hymn that able spirit affords,
 In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
 Hearing you prais'd, I say, *'tis so, 'tis true*,
 And to the most of praise add something more;
 But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
 Though words come hind-most, holds his rank before.
 Then others for the breath of words respect,
 Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

LXXXVI.

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
 Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
 That bid my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
 Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
 Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
 Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
 No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
 Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
 He, nor that affable familiar ghost
 Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
 As victors, of my silence cannot boast;
 I was not sick of any fear from thence.
 But when your countenance fil'd up his line,
 Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

LXXXVII.

Farewel ! thou art too dear for my possessing,
 And like enough thou know'st thy estimate :
 The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing ;
 My bonds in thee are all determinate.
 For how do I hold thee but by thy granting ?
 And for that riches where is my deserving ?
 The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
 And so my patent back again is swerving.
 Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
 Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking ;
 So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
 Comes home again, on better judgement making.
 Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
 In sleep a king, but waking, no such matter.

LXXXVIII.

When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
 And place my merit in the eye of Scorn,
 Upon thy side against myself I'll fight,
 And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
 With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
 Upon thy part I can set down a story
 Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted ;
 That thou, in losing me, shalt win much glory :
 And I by this will be a gainer too ;
 For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
 The injuries that to myself I do,
 Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
 Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
 That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

LXXXIX.

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
 And I will comment upon that offence :
 Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt ;
 Against thy reasons making no defence.
 Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
 To set a form upon desired change,
 As I'll myself disgrace : knowing thy will,
 I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange ;
 Be absent from thy walks ; and in my tongue
 Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell ;
 Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
 And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
 For thee, against myself I'll vow debate,
 For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

XC.

Then hate me when thou wilt ; if ever, now ;
 Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
 Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
 And do not drop in for an after-loss :
 Ah ! do not, when my heart hath seap'd this sorrow,
 Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe ;
 Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
 To linger out a purpos'd overthrow.
 If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
 When other petty griefs have done their spite,
 But in the onset come ; so shall I taste
 At first the very worst of Fortune's might ;
 And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
 Compar'd with loss of thee, will not seem so.

XCI.

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
 Some in their wealth, some in their body's force ;
 Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill,
 Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse ;
 And every humour hath its adjunct pleasure,
 Wherein it finds a joy above the rest ;
 But these particulars are not my measure,
 All these I better in one general best.
 Thy love is better than high birth to me,
 Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
 Of more delight than hawks or horses be ;
 And having thee, of all men's pride I boast.
 Wretched in this alone, that thou may'st take
 All this away, and me most wretched make.

XCII.

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
 For term of life thou art assured mine ;
 And life no longer than thy love will stay,
 For it depends upon that love of thine.
 Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
 When in the least of them my life hath end.
 I see a better state to me belongs
 Than that which on thy humour doth depend.
 Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
 Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
 O what a happy title do I find,
 Happy to have thy love, happy to die !
 But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot ?—
 Thou may'st be false, and yet I know it not :

XCIII.

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
 Like a deceived husband ; so love's face
 May still seem love to me, though alter'd-new ;
 Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place :
 For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
 Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
 In many looks the false heart's history
 Is writ, in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange,
 But heaven in thy creation did decree,
 That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell ;
 Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
 Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
 How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
 If thy sweet virtue answer not the show !

XCIV.

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
 That do not do the thing they most do show,
 Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
 Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow ;
 They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
 And husband nature's riches from expence ;
 They are the lords and owners of their faces,
 Others but stewards of their excellence.
 The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
 Though to itself it only live and die ;
 But if that flower with base infection meet,
 The basest weed out-braves his dignity :
 For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;
 Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.

XCV.

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
 Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
 Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name ?
 O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose !
 That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
 Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
 Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise ;
 Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
 O what a mansion have those vices got,
 Which for their habitation chose out thee !
 What beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
 And all things turn to fair, that eyes can see !
 Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege ;
 The hardest knife ill-us'd doth lose his edge.

XCVI.

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness,
 Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport;
 Both grace and faults are lov'd of more and less:
 'Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
 As on the finger of a throned queen
 The basest jewel will be well esteem'd;
 So are those errors that in thee are seen,
 'To truths translated, and for true things deem'd.
 How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
 If like a lamb he could his looks translate!
 How many gazers might'st thou lead away,
 If thou would'st use the strength of all thy state!
 But do not so; I love thee in such sort,
 As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XCVII.

How like a winter hath my absence been
 From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
 What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen?
 What old December's bareness every where!
 And yet this time remov'd was summer's time;
 The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
 Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,
 Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
 Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
 But hope of orphans, and unfather'd fruit;
 For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
 And thou away, the very birds are mute;
 Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
 That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

XCVIII.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
 When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
 Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing;
 That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
 Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
 Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
 Could make me any summer's story tell,
 Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
 Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
 Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose;
 They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
 Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
 Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
 As with your shadow I with these did play:

XCIX.

The forward violet thus did I chide;— [smells,
 Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that
 If not from my love's breath? The purple pride
 Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
 In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dy'd.
 The lily I condemned for thy hand,
 And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair :
 The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
 One blushing shame, another white despair ;
 A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,
 And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath ;
 But for his theft, in pride of all his growth
 A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
 More flowers I noted, yet I none could see.
 But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.

C.

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
 To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
 Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
 Darkening thy power, to lend base subjects light?
 Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
 In gentle numbers time so idly spent ;
 Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
 And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
 Rise, restive Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
 If Time have any wrinkle graven there ;
 If any, be a satire to decay,
 And make Time's spoils despised every where.
 Give my love fame faster than time wastes life ;
 So thou prevent'st his scythe, and crooked knife.

CI.

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends,
 For thy neglect of truth in beauty dy'd ?
 Both truth and beauty on my love depends ;
 So dost thou too, and therein dignify'd.
 Make answer, Muse: wilt thou not haply say,
Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd,
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay:
But best is best, if never intermix'd?—
 Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
 Excuse not silence so; for it lies in thee
 To make him much out-live a gilded tomb,
 And to be prais'd of ages yet to be.
 Then do thy office, Muse: I teach thee how
 To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

CII.

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
 I love not less, though less the show appear:
 That love is merchandiz'd, whose rich esteeming
 The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
 Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
 When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
 As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
 And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:
 Not that the summer is less pleasant now
 Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
 But that wild musick burthens every bough,
 And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
 Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
 Because I would not dull you with my song.

CIII.

Alack! what poverty my muse brings forth,
 That having such a scope to show her pride,
 The argument, all bare, is of more worth,
 Than when it hath my added praise beside.
 O blame me not if I no more can write!
 Look in your glass, and there appears a face
 That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
 Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
 Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
 To mar the subject that before was well?
 For to no other pass my verses tend,
 Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
 And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
 Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

CIV.

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
 For as you were, when first your eye I ey'd,
 Such seems your beauty still. Three winters' cold
 Have from the forests shook three summers' pride;
 Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd,
 In process of the seasons have I seen,
 Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
 Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.
 Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
 Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived,
 So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
 Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd.
 For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,
 Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

CV.

Let not my love be call'd idolatry,
 Nor my beloved as an idle show,
 Since all alike my songs and praises be,
 To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
 Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
 Still constant in a wondrous excellence ;
 Therefore my verse to constancy confin'd,
 One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
 Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,
 Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words ;
 And in this change is my invention spent,
 Three themes in one, which wond'rous scope affords.
 Fair, kind, and true, have often liv'd alone,
 Which three, till now, never kept seat in one.

CVI.

When in the chronicle of wasted time
 I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
 And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,
 In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights,
 Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
 Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
 I see their antique pen would have express'd
 Even such a beauty as you master now.
 So all their praises are but prophecies
 Of this our time, all you prefiguring ;
 And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
 They had not skill enough your worth to sing :
 For we, which now behold these present days,
 Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVII.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetick soul
 Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
 Can yet the lease of my true love control,
 Suppos'd as forfeit to a counfin'd doom.
 The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
 And the sad augurs mock their own presage ;
 Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
 And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
 Now with the drops of this most balmy time
 My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
 Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
 While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
 And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
 When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CVIII.

What 's in the brain that ink may character,
 Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit?
 What 's new to speak, what new to register,
 That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
 Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
 I must each day say o'er the very same;
 Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
 Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.
 So that eternal love in love's fresh case
 Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
 Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
 But makes antiquity for aye his page;
 Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
 Where time and outward form would show it dead.

CIX.

O never say that I was false of heart,
 Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
 As easy might I from myself depart,
 As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
 That is my home of love: if I have rang'd,
 Like him that travels, I return again;
 Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,—
 So that myself bring water for my stain.
 Never believe, though in my nature reign'd,
 All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
 That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
 To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
 For nothing this wide universe I call,
 Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

CX.

Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
 And made myself a motley to the view,
 Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
 Made old offences of affections new.
 Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth
 Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
 These blenches gave my heart another youth,
 And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.
 Now all is done, save what shall have no end:
 Mine appetite I never more will grind
 On newer proof, to try an older friend,
 A God in love, to whom I am confin'd.
 Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
 Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

CXI.

O for my sake do you with fortune chide,
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
 That did not better for my life provide,
 Than publick means, which publick manners breeds.
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
 And almost thence my nature is subdu'd
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
 Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd ;
 Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
 Potions of eysell, 'gainst my strong infection ;
 No bitterness that I will bitter think,
 Nor double penance to correct correction.
 Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye,
 Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

- CXII.

Your love and pity doth the impression fill
 Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow ;
 For what care I who calls me well or ill,
 So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow ?
 You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
 To know my shames and praises from your tongue ;
 None else to me, nor I to none alive,
 That my steel'd sense or changes, right or wrong.
 In so profound abysm I throw all care
 Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
 To critick and to flatterer stopped are.
 Mark how with my neglect I do dispense :—
 You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
 That all the world besides methinks are dead.

CXIII.

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,
 And that which governs me to go about,
 Doth part his function, and is partly blind,
 Seems seeing, bnt effectually is out ;
 For it no form delivers to the heart
 Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth lack ;
 Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
 Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch ;
 For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
 The most sweet favour, or deformed'st creature,
 The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
 The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
 Incapable of more, replete with you,
 My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.

CXIV.

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
 Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery,
 Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,
 And that your love taught it this alchemy,
 To make of moustersons and things indigest,
 Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
 Creating every bad a perfect best,
 As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
 O 'tis the first; 'tis flattery in my seeing,
 And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:
 Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
 And to his palate doth prepare the cup:
 If it be poison'd, 'tis the lesser sin
 That mine eye loves it, and doth first begin.

CXV.

Those lines that I before have writ, do lie,
 Even those that said I could not love you dearer;
 Yet then my judgement knew no reason why
 My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
 But reckoning time, whose million'd accidents
 Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
 Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
 Divert strong minds to the course of altering things;
 Alas! why, fearing of time's tyranny,
 Might I not then say, *now I love you best*,
 When I was certain o'er uncertainty,
 Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
 Love is a babe; then might I not say so,
 To give full growth to that which still doth grow?

CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:
 O no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
 I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

CXVII.

Accuse me thus; that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay;
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof, surmise accumulate,
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate:
 Since my appeal says, I did strive to prove
 The constancy and virtue of your love.

CXVIII.

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge:
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness, when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be discas'd, ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured.
 But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
 Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

CXIX.

What potions have I drunk of Syren tears,
Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O benefit of ill! now I find true
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
 So I return rebuk'd to my content,
 And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

CXX.

That you were once unkind, befriends me now,
 And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
 Needs must I under my transgression bow,
 Unless my nerves were brass or hammer'd steel.
 For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
 As I by your's, you have pass'd a hell of time;
 And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
 To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
 O that our night of woe might have remember'd
 My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
 And soon to you, as you to me, then tender'd
 The humble salve which wounded bosom fits!
 But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
 Mine ransom your's, and your's must ransom me.

CXXI.

'Tis better to be vile, than vile esteem'd,
 When not to be receives reproach of being,
 And the just pleasure lost, which is so deem'd
 Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.
 For why should others' false adulterate eyes
 Give salutation to my sportive blood?
 Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
 Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
 No,—I am that I am; and they that level
 At my abuses, reckon up their own:
 I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel;
 By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown;
 Unless this general evil they maintain,
 All men are bad and in their badness reign.

CXXII.

Thy gift, thy tables are within my brain
 Full character'd with lasting memory,
 Which shall above that idle rank remain,
 Beyond all date, even to eternity:
 Or at the least so long as brain and heart
 Have faculty by nature to subsist;
 Till each to raz'd oblivion yield his part
 Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
 That poor retention could not so much hold,
 Nor need I tallics, thy dear love to score;
 Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
 To trust those tables that receive thee more:
 To keep an adjunct to remember thee,
 Were to import forgetfulness in me.

CXXIII.

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change :
 Thy pyramids built up with newer might
 To me are nothing novel, nothing strange ;
 They are but dressings of a former sight.
 Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
 What thou dost foist upon us that is old,
 And rather make them born to our desire,
 Than think that we before have heard them told.
 Thy registers and thee I both defy,
 Not wondering at the present nor the past ;
 For thy records and what we see doth lie,
 Made more or less by thy continual haste :
 This I do vow, and this shall ever be,
 I will be true, despite thy scytlic and thee.

CXXIV.

If my dear love were but the child of state,
 It might for fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
 As subject to Time's love, or to Time's hate,
 Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
 No, it was builded far from accident ;
 It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
 Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,
 Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls :
 It fears not policy, that heretick,
 Which works on leases of short-number'd hours,
 But all alone stands hugely politick,
 That it not grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.
 To this I witness call the fools of time,
 Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime.

CXXV.

Were it aught to me I bore the canopy,
 With my extern the outward honouring,
 Or lay'd great bases for eternity,
 Which prove more short than waste or ruining ?
 Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
 Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,
 For compound sweet foregoing simple savour,
 Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent ?
 No ;—let me be obsequious in thy heart,
 And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
 Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art,
 But mutual render, only me for thee.
 Hence, thou suborn'd informer ! a true soul,
 When most impeach'd, stands least in thy control.

CXXVI.

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
 Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour;
 Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
 Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st!
 If nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
 As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,
 She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
 May time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
 Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure;
 She may detain, but not still keep her treasure:
 Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
 And her quietus is to render thee.

CXXVII.

In the old age black was not counted fair,
 Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
 But now is black beauty's successive heir,
 And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame.
 For since each hand hath put on nature's power,
 Fairing the foul with art's false borrow'd face,
 Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy hour,
 But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace.
 Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
 Her eyes so suited: and they mourners seem
 At such, who not born fair, no beauty lack,
 Slandering creation with a false esteem:
 Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
 That every tongue says, beauty should look so.

CXXVIII.

How oft, when thou, my musick, musick play'st,
 Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
 With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
 The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
 Do I envy those jacks, that nimble leap
 To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
 Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
 At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
 To be so tickled, they would change their state
 And situation with those dancing chips,
 O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
 Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.
 Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
 Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

CXXIX.

The expence of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action ; and till action, lust
 Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
 Enjoy'd no sooner, but despised straight ;
 Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
 Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad :
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so ;
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ;
 A bliss in proof,—and prov'd, a very woe ;
 Before, a joy propos'd ; behind, a dream :
 All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

CXXX.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun ;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red :
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun ;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks ;
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
 I love to hear her speak,—yet well I know
 That musick hath a far more pleasing sound ;
 I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground ;
 And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she bely'd with false compare.

CXXXI.

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
 As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel ;
 For well thou know'st to my dear dotting heart
 Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
 Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold,
 Thy face hath not the power to make love groan :
 To say they err, I dare not be so bold,
 Although I swear it to myself alone.
 And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
 A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
 One on another's neck, do witness bear
 Thy black is fairest in my judgement's place.
 In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds,
 And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

CXXXII.

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
 Knowing thy heart, torment me with disdain;
 Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
 Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
 And truly not the morning sun of heaven
 Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
 Nor that full star that ushers in the even,
 Doth half that glory to the sober west,
 As those two mourning eyes become thy face:
 O let it then as well beseem thy heart
 To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
 And suit thy pity like in every part.

Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
 And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

CXXXIII.

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
 For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!
 Is't not enough to torture me alone,
 But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
 Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
 And my next self thou harder hast engross'd;
 Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken;
 A torment thrice three-fold thus to be cross'd.
 Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
 But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail;
 Who e'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
 'Thou canst not then use rigour in my gaol:

And yet thou wilt; for I, being pent in thee,
 Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

CXXXIV.

So now I have confess'd that he is thine,
 And I myself am mortgag'd to thy will;
 Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
 Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still;
 But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
 For thou art covetous, and he is kind;
 He learn'd but, surety-like, to write for me,
 Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
 The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
 Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,
 And sue a friend, came debtor for my sake;
 So him I lose through my unkind abuse.

Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me;
 He pays the whole, and yet I am not free.

CXXXV.

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,
 And will to boot, and will in over-plus ;
 More than enough am I that vex thee still,
 To thy sweet will making addition thus.
 Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
 Not once vouchsafe to bide my will in thine ?
 Shall will in others seem right gracious,
 And in my will no fair acceptance shine ?
 The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
 And in abundance addeth to his store ;
 So thou, being rich in will, add to thy will
 One will of mine, to make thy large will more.
 Let no unkind, no fair beseeches kill ;
 Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.

CXXXVI.

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
 Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy will,
 And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there ;
 Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfill.
 Will will fulfill the treasure of thy love,
 Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
 In things of great receipt with ease we prove ;
 Among a number one is reckon'd none.
 Then in the number let me pass untold,
 Though in thy stores' account I one must be ;
 For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
 That nothing me, a something sweet to thee :
 Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
 And then thou lov'st me,—for my name is *Will*.

CXXXVII.

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
 That they behold, and see not what they see ?
 They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
 Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.
 If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,
 Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
 Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
 Whereto the judgement of my heart is ty'd ?
 Why should my heart think that a several plot,
 Which my heart knows the wide world's common place ?
 Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,
 To put fair truth upon so foul a face ?
 In things right true my heart and eyes have err'd,
 And to this false plague are they now transferr'd.

CXXXVIII.

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
 I do believe her, though I know she lies ;
 That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
 Unlearned in the world's false subtilties.
 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
 Although she knows my days are past the best,
 Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue,
 On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
 But wherefore says she not, she is unjust ?
 And wherefore says not I, that I am old ?
 O love's best habit is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not to have years told :
 Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

CXXXIX.

O call not me to justify the wrong,
 That thy unkindness lays upon my heart ;
 Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue ;
 Use power with power, and slay me not by art.
 Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere ; but in my sight,
 Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside.
 What need'st thou wound with cunning when thy might
 Is more than my o'erpress'd defence can 'bide ?
 Let me excuse thee : ah ! my love well knows
 Her pretty looks have been mine enemies ;
 And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
 That they elsewhere might dart their injuries :
 Yet do not so ; but since I am near slain,
 Kill me out-right with looks, and rid my pain.

CXL.

Be wise as thou art cruel ; do not press
 My tongue-ty'd patience with too much disdain ;
 Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
 The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
 If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
 Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so ;
 (As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
 No news but health from their physicians know :)
 For, if I should despair, I should grow mad,
 And in my madness might speak ill of thee :
 Now this ill-wresting world has grown so bad,
 Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
 That I may not be so, nor thou bely'd, [wide.
 Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go

CXL.

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
 For they in thee a thousand errors note;
 But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
 Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote.
 Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted;
 Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
 Nor taste nor smell, desire to be invited
 To any sensual feast with thee alone:
 But my five wits, nor my five senses can
 Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
 Who leaves unsway'd the likeness of a man,
 Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be:
 Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
 That she that makes me sin, awards me pain.

CXLII.

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
 Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving:
 O but with mine compare thou thine own state,
 And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;
 Or if it do, not from those lips of thine,
 That have prophan'd their scarlet ornaments,
 And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine;
 Robb'd others' beds revenues of their rents.
 Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
 Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:
 Root pity in thy heart, that when it grows,
 Thy pity may deserve to pity'd be.
 If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
 By self-example may'st thou be deny'd!

CXLIII.

Lo as a careful house-wife runs to catch
 One of her feather'd creatures broke away,
 Sets down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch
 In pursuit of the thing she would have stay;
 Whilst her neglected child holds her in chace,
 Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
 To follow that which flies before her face,
 Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;
 So run'st thou after that which flies from thee,
 Whilst I thy babe chace thee afar behind;
 But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
 And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
 So will I pray that thou may'st have thy Will,
 If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.

CXLIV.

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
 Which like two spirits do suggest me still ;
 The better angel is a man right fair,
 The worser spirit a woman, colour'd ill.
 To win me soon to hell, my female evil
 Tempteth my better angel from my side,
 And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
 Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
 And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
 Suspect I may, yet not directly tell ;
 But being both from me, both to each friend,
 I guess one angel in another's hell.
 Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
 Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

CXLV.

Those lips that Love's own hand did make,
 Breath'd forth the sound that said, *I hate*,
 To me that languish'd for her sake :
 But when she saw my woeful state,
 Straight in her heart did mercy come,
 Chiding that tongue, that ever sweet
 Was us'd in giving gentle doom ;
 And taught it thus a-new to greet :
I hate she alter'd with an end,
 That follow'd it as gentle day
 Doth follow night, who like a fiend
 From heaven to hell is flown away.
I hate from hate away she threw,
 And sav'd my life, saying—*not you*.

CXLVI.

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
 Fool'd by those rebel powers that thee array,
 Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay ?
 Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy charge ? Is this thy body's end ?
 Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store ;
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross ;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more :
 So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
 And, death once dead, there's no more dying then.

CXLVII.

My love is as a fever, longing still
 For that which longer nurseth the disease ;
 Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
 The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
 My reason, the physician to my love,
 Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
 Hath left me, and I desperate now approve,
 Desire is death, which physick did except.
 Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
 And frantick-mad with ever-more unrest ;
 My thoughts and my discourse as mad men's are,
 At random from the truth vainly express'd ;
 For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
 Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

CXLVIII.

O me ! what eyes hath love put in my head,
 Which have no correspondence with true sight ?
 Or, if they have, where is my judgement fled,
 That censures falsely what they see aright ?
 If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
 What means the world to say it is not so ?
 If it be not, then love doth well denote
 Love's eye is not so true as all men's : no,
 How can it ? O how can Love's eye be true,
 That is so vex'd with watching and with tears ?
 No marvel then though I mistake my view ;
 The sun itself sees not, till heaven clears.
 O cunning Love ! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
 Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

CXLIX.

Canst thou, O cruel ! say I love thee not,
 When I, against myself, with thee partake ?
 Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
 Am of myself, all tyrant, for thy sake ?
 Who hateth thee that I do call my friend ?
 On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon ?
 Nay if thou low'r'st on me, do I not spend
 Revenge upon myself with present moan ?
 What merit do I in myself respect,
 That is so proud thy service to despise,
 When all my best doth worship thy defect,
 Commanded by the motion of thine eyes ?
 But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind ;
 Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

CL.

O from what power hast thou this powerful might,
 With insufficiency my heart to sway?
 To make me give the lie to my true sight,
 And swear that brightness doth not grace the day
 Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
 That in the very refuse of thy deeds
 There is such strength and warrantise of skill,
 That in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?
 Who taught thee how to make me love thee more
 The more I hear and see just cause of hate?
 O, though I love what others do abhor,
 With others thou should'st not abhor my state;
 If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,
 More worthy I to be belov'd of thee.

CLI.

Love is too young to know what conscience is;
 Yet who knows not, conscience is born of love?
 Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
 Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.
 For thou betraying me, I do betray
 My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
 My soul doth tell my body that he may
 Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason;
 But rising at thy name, doth point out thee
 As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
 He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
 To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
 No want of conscience hold it that I call
 Her love, for whose dear love I rise and fall.

CLII.

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
 But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing;
 In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,
 In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
 But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
 When I break twenty? I am perjur'd most;
 For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
 And all my honest faith in thee is lost:
 For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
 Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;
 And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
 Or made them swear against the thing they see;
 For I have sworn thee fair: more perjur'd I,
 To swear, against the truth, so foul a lie!

CLIII.

Cupid lay'd by his brand, and fell asleep:
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground;
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of love
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seething bath which yet men prove,
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye love's brand new-fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast;
I sick withal, the help of bath desired,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
But found no cure; the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire; my mistress' eyes.

CLIV.

The little love-god lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep,
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd;
And so the general of hot desire
Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarm'd.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseas'd; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came here for cure, and this by that I prove,
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

I.

DID not the heavenly rhetorick of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment,
A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
Thy grace being gain'd, cures all disgrace in me.
My vow was breath, and breath a vapour is;
Then thou fair sun, which on my earth dost shine,
Exhal'st this vapour vow; in thee it is:
If broken, then it is no fault of mine.
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
To break an oath, to win a paradise?

II.

Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook,
With young Adonis, lovely, fresh, and green,
Did court the lad with many a lovely look,
Such looks as none could look but beauty's queen.
She told him stories to delight his ear;
She show'd him favours to allure his eye;
To win his heart, she touch'd him here and there:
Touches so soft still conquer chastity.
But whether unripe years did want conceit,
Or he refus'd to take her figur'd proffer,
'The tender nibbler would not touch the bait,
But smile and jest at every gentle offer:
Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward;
He rose and ran away; ah fool too froward!

III.

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?
O never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd:
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll constant prove;
Those thoughts to me like oaks, to thee like osiers bow'd.
Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live, that art can comprehend.
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;
Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend;
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire:

Thine eye Jove's lightning seems, thy voice his dreadful
thunder,
Which (not to anger bent) is musick and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O do not love that wrong,
'To sing the heavens' praise with such an earthly tongue.

IV.

Scarcely had the sun dried up the dewy morn,
And scarce the herd gone to the hedge for shade,
When Cytherea, all in love forlorn,
A longing tarriance for Adonis made,
Under an osier growing by a brook,
A brook, where Adon us'd to cool his spleen.
Hot was the day ; she hotter that did look
For his approach, that often there had been.
Anon he comes, and throws his mantle by,
And stood stark naked on the brook's green brim ;
The sun look'd on the world with glorious eye,
Yet not so wistly, as this queen on him :
He spying her, bounc'd in, whereas he stood ;
Oh Jove, quoth she, why was not I a flood ?

V.

Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle,
Mild as a dove, but neither true nor trusty ;
Brighter than glass is, and yet, as glass is, brittle,
Softer than wax, and yet, as iron, rusty :
A little pale, with damask die to grace her,
None fairer, nor none falser to deface her.
Her lips to mine how often hath she join'd,
Between each kiss her oaths of true love swearing!
How many tales to please me hath she coin'd,
Dreading my love, the loss whereof still fearing !
Yet in the midst of all her pure protestings,
Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were jestings.
She burnt with love, as straw with fire flameth,
She burnt out love, as soon as straw out burneth ;
She fram'd the love, and yet she foil'd the framing,
She bade love last, and yet she fell a turning.
Was this a lover, or a lecher whether ?
Bad in the best, though excellent in neither.

VI.

If musick and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
 Upon the lute doth ravish human sense ;
 Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such,
 As passing all conceit, needs no defence.
 Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound,
 That Phoebus' lute, the queen of musiek, makes ;
 And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd,
 Whenas himself to singing he betakes.
 One god is god of both, as poets feign ;
 One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

VII.

Fair was the morn, when the fair queen of love,

* * * * *

Paler for sorrow than her milk-white dove,
 For Adon's sake, a youngster proud and wild ;
 Her stand she takes upon a steep-up hill :
 Auon Adonis comes with horn and hounds ;
 She silly queen, with more than love's good will,
 Forbade the boy he should not pass those grounds ;
 Once, quoth she, did I see a fair sweet youth
 Here in these brakes deep-wounded with a boar,
 Deep in the thigh, a spectacle of ruth !
 See in my thigh, quoth she, here was the sore :
 She showed hers ; he saw more wounds than one,
 And blushing fled, and left her all alone.

VIII.

Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon faded,
 Pluck'd in the bud, and faded in the spring !
 Bright orient pearl, alack ! too timely shaded !
 Fair creature, kill'd too soon by death's sharp sting !
 Like a green plum that hangs upon a tree,
 And falls, through wind, before the fall should be.

I weep for thee, and yet no cause I have ;
 For why? thou left'st me nothing in thy Will.
 And yet thou left'st me more than I did crave ;
 For why? I craved nothing of thee still :
 O yes, dear friend, I pardon crave of thee ;
 Thy discontent thou didst bequeath to me.

IX.

Fair Venuswith Adonis sitting by her,
 Under a myrtle shade, began to woo him :
 She told the youngling how god Mars did try her,
 And as he fell to her, she fell to him.
 Even thus, quoth she, the warlike god embrac'd me ;
 And then she clip'd Adonis in her arms :

Even thus, quoth she, the warlike god unlac'd me;
 As if the boy should use like loving charms.
 Even thus, quoth she, he seized on my lips,
 And with her lips on his did act the seizure;
 And as she fetched breath, away he skips,
 And would not take her meaning nor her pleasure.

Ah! that I had my lady at this bay,
 To kiss and clip me till I run away!

x.

Crabbed age and youth
 Cannot live together;
 Youth is full of pleasance,
 Age is full of care:
 Youth like summer morn,
 Age like winter weather;
 Youth like summer brave,
 Age like winter bare.
 Youth is full of sport,
 Age's breath is short,
 Youth is nimble, age is lame:
 Youth is hot and bold,
 Age is weak and cold;
 Youth is wild, and age is tame.
 Age, I do abhor thee,
 Youth, I do adore thee;
 O, my love, my love is young:
 Age, I do defy thee;
 O sweet shepherd, lie thee,
 For methinks thou stay'st too long.

xi.

Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,
 A shining gloss, that fadeth suddenly;
 A flower that dies, when first it 'gins to bud;
 A brittle glass, that's broken presently:
 A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
 Lost, faded, broken, dead within an hour.
 And as goods lost are sold or never found,
 As faded gloss no rubbing will refresh,
 As flowers dead, lie wither'd on the ground,
 As broken glass no cement can redress,
 So beauty blemish'd once, for ever's lost,
 In spite of physick, painting, pain, and cost.

xii.

Good night, good rest. Ah! neither be my share:
 She bade good night, that kept my rest away;
 And daft me to a cabin hang'd with care,

To descant on the doubts of my decay.

Farewel, quoth she, and come again to-morrow;

Farewel I could not, for I supp'd with sorrow.

Yet at my parting sweetly did she smile,

In scorn or friendship, nill I construe whether:

May be, she joy'd to jest at my exile,

May be, again to make me wander thither:

Wander, a word for shadows like myself,

As take the pain, but cannot pluck the pelf.

XIII.

Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east!

My heart doth charge the watch; the morning rise

Doth cite each moving sense from idle rest.

Not daring trust the office of mine eyes,

While Philomela sits and sings, I sit and mark,

And wish her lays were tuned like the lark;

For she doth welcome day-light with her ditty,

And drives away dark dismal-dreaming night:

The night so pack'd, I post unto my pretty;

Heart hath his hope, and eyes their wished sight;

Sorrow chang'd to solace, solace mix'd with sorrow;

For why? she sigh'd, and bade me come to-morrow.

Were I with her, the night would post too soon;

But now are minutes added to the hours;

To spite me now, each minute seems an hour;

Yet not for me, shine sun to succour flowers!

Pack night, peep day; good day, of night now borrow;

Short, Night, to-night, and length thyself to-morrow.

XIV.

It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,

That liked of her master as well as well might be, [see,

Till looking on an Englishman, the fairest that eye could

Her fancy fell a turning. [fight,

Long was the combat doubtful, that love with love did

To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight:

To put in practice either, alas it was a spite

Unto the silly damsel.

But one must be refused, more mickle was the pain,

That nothing could be used, to turn them both to gain,

For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with disdain:

Alas she could not help it!

Thus art with arms contending was victor of the day,

Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away;

Then lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay;

For now my song is ended.

XV.

On a day (alack the day !)
 Love, whose month was ever May,
 Spy'd a blossom passing fair,
 Playing in the wanton air,
 Through the velvet leaves the wind,
 All unseen, 'gan passage find ;
 That the lover, sick to death,
 Wish'd himself the heaven's breath :
 Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow ;
 Air, would I might triumph so !
 But alas my hand hath sworn
 Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn :
 Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,
 Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet.
 Do not call it sin in me,
 That I am forsworn for thee ;
 Thou for whom even Jove would swear
 Juno but an Ethiope were ;
 And deny himself for Jove,
 Turning mortal for thy love.

XVI.

My flocks feed not,
 My ewes breed not,
 My rams speed not,
 All is amiss :
 Love's denying,
 Faith's defying,
 Heart's renying,
 Causer of this.
 All my merry jigs are quite forgot,
 All my lady's love is lost, God wot :
 Where her faith was firmly fix'd in love,
 There a nay is plac'd without remove.
 One silly cross
 Wrought all my loss ;
 O frowning fortune, cursed, fickle dame !
 For now I see,
 Inconstancy
 More in women than in men remain.
 In black mourn I,
 All fears scorn I,
 Love hath forlorn me,
 Living in thrall :
 Heart is bleeding,
 All help needing,
 (O cruel speeding !)
 Fraughted with gall.

My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal,
 My wether's bell rings doleful knell;
 My curtail dog that wont to have play'd
 Plays not at all, but seems afraid;
 With sighs so deep,
 Procures to weep,
 In howling-wise, to see my doleful plight.
 How sighs resound
 Through heartless ground,
 Like a thousand vanquish'd men in bloody fight!
 Clear wells spring not,
 Sweet birds sing not,
 Green plants bring not
 Forth; they die:
 Herds stand weeping,
 Flocks all sleeping,
 Nymphs back peeping
 Fearfully.
 All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
 All our merry meetings on the plains,
 All our evening sport from us is fled,
 All our love is lost, for love is dead.
 Farewel, sweet love,
 Thy like ne'er was
 For sweet content, the cause of all my moan:
 Poor Coridon
 Must live alone,
 Other help for him I see that there is none.

XVII.

When as thine eye hath chose the dame,
 And stall'd the deer that thou should'st strike,
 Let reason rule things worthy blame,
 As well as fancy, partial might:
 Take counsel of some wiser head,
 Neither too young, nor yet unwed.
 And when thou com'st thy tale to tell,
 Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk,
 Lest she some subtle practice smell;
 (A cripple soon can find a halt:)
 But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
 And set her person forth to sale.
 What though her frowning brows be bent,
 Her cloudy looks will calm ere night;
 And then too late she will repent,
 That thus dissembled her delight;
 And twice desire, ere it be day,
 That which with scorn she put away.

What though she strive to try her strength,
And ban and brawl, and say thee nay,
Her feeble force will yield at length,
When craft hath taught her thus to say :

“ Had women been so strong as men,
In faith you had not had it then.”

And to her will frame all thy ways ;
Spare not to spend,—and chiefly there
Where thy desert may merit praise,
By ringing in thy lady’s ear :

The strongest castle, tower, and town,
The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust,
And in thy suit be humble, true ;
Unless thy lady prove unjust,
Press never thou to choose anew :

When time shall serve, be thou not slack
To proffer, though she put thee back.

The wiles and guiles that women work,
Dissembled with an outward show,
The tricks and toys that in them lurk,
The cock that treads them shall not know.

Have you not heard it said full oft,
A woman’s nay doth stand for nought ?

Think women still to strive with men,
To sin, and never for to saint :
There is no heaven, by holy then,
When time with age shall them attain.

Were kisses all the joys in bed,
One woman would another wed.

But soft ; enough,—too much I fear,
Lest that my mistress hear my song ;
She’ll not stick to round me i’ th’ ear,
To teach my tongue to be so long :

Yet will she blush, here be it said,
To hear her secrets so bewray’d.

XVIII.

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring :
Every thing did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone :

She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
 Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,
 And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
 That to hear it was great pity :
 Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry,
 Teru, Teru, by and by :

That to hear her so complain,
 Scarce I could from tears refrain ;
 For her griefs so lively shown,
 Made me think upon mine own.
 Ah ! (thought I) thou mourn'st in vain ;
 None take pity on thy pain :
 Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee ;
 Ruthless beasts, they will not cheer thee ;
 King Pandion, he is dead ;
 All thy friends are lapp'd in lead :
 All thy fellow birds do sing,
 Careless of thy sorrowing.
 Even so, poor bird, like thee,
 None alive will pity me.
 Whilst as fickle fortune smil'd,
 Thou and I were both beguil'd.
 Every one that flatters thee,
 Is no friend in misery.
 Words are easy like the wind ;
 Faithful friends are hard to find.
 Every man will be thy friend,
 Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend ;
 But if store of crowns be scant,
 No man will supply thy want.
 If that one be prodigal,
 Bountiful they will him call :
 And with such like flattering,
 "*Pity but he were a king.*"
 If he be addict to vice,
 Quickly him they will entice ;
 If to women he be bent,
 They have him at commendement ;
 But if fortune once do frown,
 Then farewell his great renown :
 They that fawn'd on him before,
 Use his company no more.
 He that is thy friend indeed,
 He will help thee in thy need,
 If thou sorrow, he will weep ;
 If thou wake, he cannot sleep :

Thus of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.

XIX.

Take, oh, take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn :
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain.
Hide, oh, hide those hills of snow
Which thy frozen bosom bears,
On whose tops the pinks that grow,
Are of those that April wears.
But first set my poor heart free,
Bound in those icy chains by thee.

XX.

Let the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.
But thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul pre-currer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
'To this troop come thou not near.
From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king :
Keep the obsequy so strict.
Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive musick can,
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the *requiem* lack his right.
And thou, treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender mak'st
With the breath thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.
Here the anthem doth commence :
Love and constancy is dead ;
Phoenix and the turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

So they lov'd, as love in twain
 Had the essence but in one ;
 Two distincts, division none :
 Number there in love was slain.
 Hearts remote, yet not asunder ;
 Distance, and no space was seen
 'Twixt the turtle and his queen :
 But in them it were a wonder.
 So between them love did shine,
 That the turtle saw his right
 Flaming in the phoenix' sight :
 Either was the other's mine.
 Property was thus appall'd,
 That the self was not the same ;
 Single nature's double name
 Neither two nor one was call'd.
 Reason, in itself confounded,
 Saw division grow together ;
 'To themselves yet either-neither,
 Simple were so well compounded.
 That it cried, how true a twain
 Seemeth this concordant one !
 Love hath reason, reason none,
 If what parts can so remain.
 Where upon it made this threne
 To the phoenix and the dove,
 Co-supremes and stars of love ;
 As chorus to their tragick scene.

THRENOS.

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
 Grace in all simplicity,
 Here inclos'd in cinders lie.
 Death is now the phoenix' nest ;
 And the turtle's loyal breast
 'To eternity doth rest,
 Leaving no posterity :—
 'Twas not their infirmity,
 It was married chastity.
 'Truth may seem, but cannot be ;
 Beauty brag, but 'tis not she ;
 Truth and beauty buried be.
 To this urn let those repair
 That are either true or fair ;
 For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

FROM off a hill whose concave womb re-worded
A plaintful story from a sisting vale;
My spirits to attend this double voice accorded,
And down I lay to list the sad-tun'd tale:
Ere long espy'd a fickle maid full pale,
Tearing of papers, breaking rings a-twain,
Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.

Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
Which fortified her visage from the sun,
Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw
The carcase of a beauty spent and done.
Time had not scythed all that youth begun,
Nor youth all quit; but, spite of heaven's fell rage,
Some beauty peep'd through lattice of sear'd age.

Oft did she heave her napkin to her cyne,
Which on it had conceited characters,
Laund'ring the silken figures in the brine
That season'd woe had pelleted in tears,
And often reading what contents it bears;
As often shrieking undistinguish'd woe,
In clamours of all size, both high and low.

Sometimes her levell'd eyes their carriage ride,
As they did battery to the spheres intend;
Sometime diverted their poor balls are ty'd
To the orb'd earth; sometimes they do extend
Their view right on; anon their gazes lend
To every place at once, and no where fix'd,
The mind and sight distractedly commix'd.

Her hair, nor loose, nor ty'd in formal plat,
Proclaim'd in her a careless hand of pride;
For some, untuck'd, descended her sheav'd hat,
Hanging her pale and pined cheek beside;
Some in her threaten fillet still did bide,
And, true to bondage, would not break from thence,
Though slackly braided in loose negligence.

A thousand favours from a maund she drew
Of amber, crystal, and of bedded jet,
Which one by one she in a river threw,
Upon whose weeping margent she was set,—
Like usury, applying wet to wet,
Or monarchs' hands, that let not bounty fall,
Where want cries *some*, but where excess begs all.

Of folded schedules had she many a one,
Which she perus'd, sigh'd, tore, and gave the flood;
Crack'd many a ring of posied gold and bone,
Bidding them find their sepulchres in mud;
Found yet more letters sadly penn'd in blood,
With sleided silk feat and affectedly
Enswath'd, and seal'd to curious secrecy.

These often bath'd she in her fluxive eyes,
And often kiss'd, and often 'gan to tear;
Cry'd, O false blood! thou register of lies,
What unapproved witness dost thou bear!
Ink would have seem'd more black and damned here!
This said, in top of rage the lines she rents,
Big discontent so breaking their contents.

A reverend man that graz'd his cattle nigh,
(Sometime a blusterer, that the ruffle knew
Of court, of city, and had let go by
The swiftest hours,) observed as they flew;
Towards this afflicted fancy fastly drew;
And, privileg'd by age, desires to know
In brief, the grounds and motives of her woe.

So slides he down upon his grained bat,
And comely-distant sits he by her side;
When he again desires her, being sat,
Her grievance with his hearing to divide:
If that from him there may be aught apply'd
Which may her suffering ecstasy assuage,
'Tis promis'd in the charity of age.

Father, she says, though in me you behold
The injury of many a blasting hour,
Let it not tell your judgement I am old;
Not age, but sorrow, over me hath power:
I might as yet have been a spreading flower,
Fresh to myself, if I had self-apply'd
Love to myself, and to no love beside.

But woe is me! too early I attended
A youthful suit (it was to gain my grace)
Of one by nature's outwards so commended,
That maiden's eyes stuck over all his face:
Love lack'd a dwelling, and made him her place;
And when in his fair parts she did abide,
She was new lodg'd, and newly deified.

His browny locks did hang in crooked curls ;
 And every light occasion of the wind
 Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls.
 What's sweet to do, to do will aptly find :
 Each eye that saw him did enchant the mind ;
 For on his visage was in little drawn,
 What largeness thinks in paradise was sawn.

Small show of man was yet upon his chin ;
 His phoenix down began but to appear,
 Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin,
 Whose bare out-bragg'd the web it seem'd to wear ;
 Yet show'd his visage by that cost most dear ;
 And nice affections wavering stood in doubt
 If best 'twere as it was, or best without.

His qualities were beauteous as his form,
 For maiden-tongu'd he was, and thereof free ;
 Yet, if men mov'd him, was he such a storm
 As oft 'twixt May and April is to see,
 When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be.
 His rudeness so with his authoriz'd youth,
 Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

Well could he ride, and often men would say
 " *That horse his mettle from his rider takes :*
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway, [makes !"
What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he
 And controversy hence a question takes,
 Whether the horse by him became his deed,
 Or he his manage by the well-doing steed.

But quickly on his side the verdict went,
 His real habitude gave life and grace
 To appertainings and to ornament,
 Accomplish'd in himself, not in his case :
 All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
 Came for additions ; yet their purpos'd trim
 Piec'd not his grace, but were all grac'd by him.

So on the tip of his subduing tongue
 All kind of arguments and question deep,
 All replication prompt, and reason strong,
 For his advantage still did wake and sleep :
 To make the weeper laugh, the laughter weep,
 He had the dialect and different skill,
 Catching all passions in his craft of will ;

That he did in the general bosom reign
Of young, of old; and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted :
Consents bewitch'd, ere he desire, have granted ;
And dialogu'd for him what he would say,
Ask'd their own wills, and made their wills obey.

Many there were that did his picture get,
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind ;
Like fools that in the imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find
Of lands and mansions, their's in thought assign'd ;
And labouring in more pleasures to bestow them,
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them :

So many have, that never touch'd his hand,
Sweetly suppos'd them mistress of his heart.
My woeful self, that did in freedom stand,
And was my own fee-simple, (not in part,)
What with his art in youth, and youth in art,
Threw my affections in his charmed power,
Reserv'd the stalk, and gave him all my flower,

Yet did I not, as some my equals did,
Demand of him, nor being desired, yielded ;
Finding myself in honour so forbid,
With safest distance I mine honour shielded :
Experience for me many bulwarks builded
Of proofs new-bleeding, which remain'd the foil
Of this false jewel, and his amorous spoil.

But ah ! who ever shunn'd with precedent
The destin'd ill she must herself assay ?
Or forc'd examples, 'gainst her own content,
To put the by-pass'd perils in her way ?
Counsel may stop a while what will not stay ;
For when we rage, advice is often seen
By blunting us to make our wits more keen.

Nor gives it satisfaction to our blood,
That we must curb it upon others' proof,
To be forbid the sweets that seem so good,
For fear of harms that preach in our behoof.
O appetite, from judgement stand aloof !
The one a palate hath that needs will taste,
Though reason weep, and cry *it is thy last*.

For further I could say, *this man's untrue*,
And knew the patterns of his foul beguiling;
Heard where his plants in others' orchards grew,
Saw how deceits were gilded in his smiling;
Knew vows were ever brokers to defiling;
Thought, characters, and words, merely but art,
And bastards of his foul adulterate heart.

And long upon these terms I held my city,
Till thus he 'gan besiege me: "Gentle maid,
Have of my suffering youth some feeling pity,
And be not of my holy vows afraid:
That's to you sworn, to none was ever said;
For feasts of love I have been call'd unto,
Till now did ne'er invite, nor never vow.

All my offences that abroad you see,
Are errors of the blood, none of the mind:
Love made them not; with acture they may be,
Where neither party is nor true nor kind:
They sought their shame that so their shame did find;
And so much less of shame in me remains,
By how much of me their reproach contains.

Among the many that mine eyes have seen,
Not one whose flame my heart so much as warm'd,
Or my affection put to the smallest teen,
Or any of my leasures ever charm'd:
Harm have I done to them, but ne'er was harm'd;
Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free,
And reign'd, commanding in his monarchy.

Look here what tributes wounded fancies sent me,
Of paled pearls, and rubies red as blood;
Figuring that they their passions likewise lent me
Of grief and blushes, aptly understood
In bloodless white and the encrimson'd mood;
Effects of terror and dear modesty,
Encamp'd in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

And lo! behold these talents of their hair,
With twisted metal amorously impleach'd,
I have receiv'd from many a several fair,
(Their kind acceptance weepingly beseech'd,)
With the annexions of fair gems enrich'd,
And deep-brain'd sonnets that did amplify
Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality.

The diamond ; why 'twas beautiful and hard,
Whereto his invis'd properties did tend ;
The deep-green emerald, in whose fresh regard
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend ;
The heaven-hued sapphire and the opal blend
With objects manifold ; each several stone,
With wit well blazon'd, smil'd or made some moan.

Lo ! all these trophies of affections hot,
Of pensiv'd and subdued desires the tender,
Nature hath charg'd me that I hoard them not,
But yield them up where I myself must render,
That is, to you, my origin and ender :
For these, of force, must your oblations be,
Since I their altar, you enpatron me.

O then advance of yours that phraseless hand,
Whose white weighs down the airy scale of praise ;
Take all these similies to your own command,
Hallow'd with sighs that burning lungs did raise ;
What me your minister, for you obeys,
Works under you ; and to your audit comes
Their distract parcels in combined sums.

Lo ! this device was sent me from a nun,
Or sister sanctified of holiest note ;
Which late her noble suit in court did shun,
Whose rarest havings made the blossoms dote ;
For she was sought by spirits of richest coat,
But kept cold distance, and did thence remove,
To spend her living in eternal love.

But O, my sweet, what labour is 't to leave
The thing we have not, mastering what not strives ?
Playing the place which did no form receive,
Playing patient sports in unconstrained gyves :
She that her fame so to herself contrives,
The scars of battle scapeth by the flight,
And makes her absence valiant, not her might.

O pardon me, in that my boast is true ;
The accident which brought me to her eye,
Upon the moment did her force subdue,
And now she would the caged cloister fly :
Religious love put out religion's eye :
Not to be tempted, would she be enmur'd,
And now, to tempt all, liberty procur'd.

How mighty then you are, O hear me tell!
 The broken bosoms that to me belong,
 Have emptied all their fountains in my well,
 And mine I pour your ocean all among:
 I strong o'er them, and you o'er me being strong,
 Must for your victory us all congeat,
 As compound love to physick your cold breast.

My parts had power to charm a sacred nun,
 Who disciplin'd and dieted in grace,
 Believ'd her eyes when I the assail begun,
 All vows and consecrations giving place.
 O most potential love! vow, bond, nor space,
 In thee bath neither sting, knot, nor confine,
 For thou art all, and all things else are thine.

When thou impresses, what are precepts worth
 Of stale example? When thou wilt inflame,
 How coldly those impediments stand forth
 Of wealth, of filial fear, law, kindred, fame? [shame,
 Love's arms are peace, 'gainst rule, 'gainst sense, 'gainst
 And sweetens, in the suffering pangs it bears,
 The aloes of all forces, shocks, and fears.

Now all these hearts that do on mine depend,
 Feeling it break, with bleeding groans they pine,
 And suppliant their sighs to you extend,
 And leave the battery that you make 'gainst mine,
 Lending soft audience to my sweet design,
 And credent soul to that strong-bonded oath,
 That shall prefer and undertake my troth."

This said, his watery eyes he did dismount,
 Whose sights till then were levell'd on my face;
 Each cheek a river running from a fount
 With brinish current downward flow'd apace:
 O how the channel to the stream gave grace!
 Who, glaz'd with crystal, gate the glowing roses
 That flame through water with their hue incloses.

O father, what a hell of witchcraft lies
 In the small orb of one particuar tear?
 But with the inundation of the eyes
 What rocky heart to water will not wear?
 What breast so cold that is not warmed here?
 O cleft effect! cold modesty, hot wrath,
 Both fire from hence and chill extincture bath!

For lo! his passion, but an art of craft,
 Even there resolv'd my reason into tears;
 There my white stole of chastity I daft,
 Shook off my sober guards, and civil fears;
 Appear to him, as he to me appears,
 All melting; though our drops this difference bore,
 His poison'd me, and mine did him restore.

In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
 Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,
 Of burning blushes, or of weeping water,
 Of swooning paleness; and he takes and leaves,
 In either's aptness as it best deceives,
 To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
 Or to turn white and swoon at tragick shows;

That not a heart which in his level came,
 Could scape the hail of his all-hurting aim,
 Showing fair nature is both kind and tame;
 In them, would win whom he would maim:
 When he sought he would exclaim;
 In heart-wish'd luxury,
 He prais'd the maid, and prais'd cold chastity.

Thus merely with the game
 The naked and concealed fiend he
 That the unexperienc'd gave the tempter
 Above them hover'd.
 He should've?

Ah me! I fell; and yet do question make
 What I should do again for such a sake.

O, that infected moisture of his eye,
 O, that false fire which in his cheek so glow'd,
 O, that fore'd thunder from his heart did fly,
 O, that sad breath his sennyng lungs bestow'd,
 We should have loved him, and we should have lov'd,
 We should have gain betray the love,
 And we should have reconciled him.

THE END.

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